

## IN THE WILDERNESS.

BY MISS CAMILLA WILLIAM.

I HAVE often thought that if Henry Carter had been happy in his childhood, he might have been happy all his life. It makes such a difference. We all know the saying, "As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined;" but few fail to reproach the tree, nevertheless.

Carter was an orphan at the age of three years, and was then adopted by a childless aunt, who froze up whatever milk of human kindness there might be in his heart. The boy was full of talent and affection; but, unhappily, was also exceedingly shy and sensitive. Mrs. Brainard was a hard, cold woman, who kept the letter of the law, and not the spirit. She was angry that what she called her duty compelled her to take her brother's orphan, and she made the child pay, as such persons can; not by beating him, but by starving his heart, and chilling his aspirations. So the boy got a twist that showed in the man, making him odd, jealous and morbid in all his feelings. In an evil hour, he came across Carrie Wilson, and she accomplished the work that his aunt had begun.

Carrie was one of those persons who make us doubt if thoughtlessness is not one of the worst of crimes, if, indeed, they can escape with the charge of being only thoughtless. The question is, has any one the right to be thoughtless in matters which may concern the happiness of another? Carrie was a pretty little village coquette, nothing more. It was said that Henry Carter was cold and never noticed a woman, and she resolved to make him notice her.

The scene of this flirtation was Eldon, a village in New England, at a time when Eastern villages were more unsophisticated than they are now. No railroad came within twenty-five miles of the town, the only means of communication being by stage-coach. All about were forests primeval, unbroken for many a mile to northward, thinned a little east and west for farms. Southward a few miles was the sea.

Carrie's father lived on a large farm three miles west of the village, and owned a tract of land on the east side. This last was un-

derstood to be his daughter's wedding portion.

"So you see I am an heiress," Carrie laughed, after telling Carter her expectations. "To be sure, the land isn't worth much now; but when the railroad is built, it will be. I wish it were built now."

"Do you want to be rich?" asked the young man, frowning slightly.

"To be sure I do! I want to see the world!" And Miss Carrie gave her head a toss, plainly indicating that the great world was her proper stage.

Her admirer saw nothing ridiculous in it. In a three weeks' acquaintance he had grown to believe that nothing on earth could be lovelier than that plump little figure, those flaxen clustering curls, blue eyes, dimpled cheeks and pouting lips.

"I wish I could make you rich!" he said in a low tone, dropping his eyes.

A better woman would have been pained and embarrassed by the words, and the tone of suppressed passion in which they were uttered. But Carrie only laughed. "Thank you! But it would be nicer to have papa do that," she said.

But she blushed a little, though only with vanity, and, as any lover might, he misinterpreted it. But whatever ardent words he might have added, she dexterously put off. She had no notion of spoiling her sport by having to refuse him just yet.

They were out with a skating-party, and Carrie had seated herself on a buffalo-robe on the shore to rest. Now she started up with the laughing challenge "catch me if you can!" and started off, her curls on the breeze, her scarlet petticoat fluttering like a banner, her little skates flashing like mimic lightnings. She was a first-rate skater, and so was he; and of course he could have caught her again and again, if he had dared to take her challenge literally. He did not, but it was bewilderingly delightful for all that. Every gentleman present was, he was convinced, envying him, yet she seemed to notice no one but him. She looked at him in a coquettish, provocative way which showed she knew her power and wished to keep it. And why should

she wish to keep it, if she did not love him? thought the foolish fellow.

If he had known then, it might have saved him something. He was pretty far gone, and, what was worse for one like him, he was committed. Everybody saw that he was in love, and spoke of it. But there was yet room for escape—if he had known.

The last person whom he would have thought of being jealous of was Sewel Leslie, though the young man was handsome, had talent and some property. He had also paid a little attention, off and on, to Carrie, for several years. But Carter thought, if he had wanted her, he would have gone on his knees at the first chance, and if she had wanted him, she would have brought him to his knees. So he feared nothing. He did not suspect what others did, that Carrie was piqued at Leslie's caprice, and was playing off on him all this time, though without looking at him. Neither did he nor any other suspect that Leslie liked the girl in spite of himself, and, while hating her coquetry, could not help forgiving herself. He was attending closely to Miss Cordelia White now, and appeared not to see Carrie, but in truth not a motion of the witch escaped him. When Carrie, tired of her apparent lack of success, floated off and left the ice, Leslie was not long in following. The pond was five miles from the village, and the skating-party was also a sleighing-party. Carrie and Carter took their places in the front seat of a large double sleigh, and Cordelia and Leslie were in the back seat.

"Does he mean to marry her?" Carrie thought angrily, trying to find an excuse to look round at the couple behind her. "Is he in love with her? People say that she is a good, sweet-tempered girl. I suppose they don't call me good. Bah! I'd like to upset her into the snow!"

But while her heart was full of the two behind her, she was chatting merrily to her escort, and delighting him with her airs and graces. Presently she coaxed the reins from his hands, and effectually disturbed her rival by her reckless driving.

"O, don't, Carrie!" cried Cordelia, who was very timid. "Please don't let her drive so, Mr. Carter."

Carrie only laughed in reply, and sent out a little hiss into the pricked-up ears of the horses. They tossed their heads and flew over the cranching snow.

Carter watched his companion with delight. The color in her cheeks, the mischief in her eyes, her dimples and gayety all enchanted him. For whom, he thought, could this display be, if not for him? He gazed with rapture into her face, trembled at the light touch of her arm to his, not caring if she dashed them all over the rocks that lined the roadside, so long as he went with her. His love was of that desperate sort that welcomes adventure and danger.

But Carrie soon found the horses pulling uncomfortably on her hands, and she gave up the reins just as Cordelia screamed out, saying that they were going over. They did not go over, but Carrie had an opportunity to glance behind her. She gave but one look, then turned quickly and stared straight before her. She had seen Cordelia's face hidden in Sewel Leslie's shoulder, while he tenderly soothed her fright, both too much occupied to notice Carrie's fleeting glance.

There was a momentary compression of the lips, a slight fading of the rich color in the cheeks, that was all. Then after a minute she was laughing as gayly as ever. "They must be engaged," was her mental conclusion. "Corde is too prim to lay her head on a fellow's shoulder, unless she is engaged to him. But they shan't say that I am disappointed."

They drew up at the house in the village where Carrie was visiting. "I'll call for you at seven o'clock," Carter whispered as he helped her out.

She nodded, gave him a beaming, blushing smile, just spared a careless glance to the two others, and tripped gayly into the house.

That night there was a concert in the town hall, a great affair for Eldon. A second-rate opera singer, visiting the city of B., thirty miles distant, had condescended to sing one night in Eldon. Never had such a star visited them before, and they were on the *qui vive*.

"I'll look my best," thought Carrie, curling her hair before the glass in her room, "I'll make him sorry if I can."

She did succeed, undeniably, in looking most lovely. Her little furred jacket was as jaunty as possible, and set off her form admirably, all her sunny hair was a glistening cloud of curls, her white throat shone like alabaster under its band of cherry velvet, and her cheeks were like roses.

Cordelia White, sitting a little back with Leslie, watched the two uneasily. "I am afraid Carrie is making trouble," she said. "It is cruel to disappoint and mortify a man like Henry Carter. He will take it hard. Look at him!"

Carter was rather swarthy and sallow ordinarily, but now a faint glow burned under his dusky skin, making it a bright bronze. His lips were crimson, and parted in a slight smile, as if the beatings of his heart made him breathless, and there was a glad and tender look in his eyes that no one had ever seen there before. It was the face of a man in the first flush and tremor of supreme happiness.

Leslie saw enough in that face to justify his companion's fears. Then he looked at Carrie, and tried to be angry, but could not. Pretty creature! And the suspicion crossed his mind that she might be trying to pique him. Carrie certainly had received his attentions with peculiar favor, and when he went elsewhere, had shown unmistakable signs of uneasiness. That he knew.

"I'm not going to be snubbed and jilted by her," he thought. "But maybe she was in earnest with me. No matter. I am not the man to try and cut another one out."

But he kept on looking, nevertheless, and the more he watched the more uneasy he became. What right had she to encourage any other man, when she must know that he, Leslie, liked her, and was only trying her, to see if she were flirting with him or loved him? A coquette like her ought to know that a man has a right to try his ground before trying to make a fool of himself.

The *prima donna* shrieked, and trilled, and quavered in the most approved second-rate style, and the audience went into raptures, fully believing that it must be the very highest of high art. Carrie Wilson was one of the most enthusiastic. She clapped her plump little hands, and by a peremptory nod told her escort when he was to applaud. He, poor fellow! was conscious of nothing but herself, and the sweetest sound he heard that evening was her voice speaking to him, and the clapping of her pink palms.

The next morning Carrie awoke with a very confused head. She had dreamed a

good deal in the night, but as her wits cleared, some of the most dreamlike visions did not go. They stayed, they asserted their reality. It was no dream that she had the night before listened to the most impassioned and vehement declaration of love which had ever been made her. Others had complimented her dimples and her eyes, but this man never spoke of them. He put her on a pedestal; she was his goddess, his angel, he adored her as something above common humanity. What promises he had made her! He knew that he had talent, and would work, would do anything for her sake. If she would marry him, she should be proud of him.

His impetuosity had carried her away. She had promised, and was to be married to him in three months.

"I couldn't do better," she said to herself, thinking the matter over in the morning. "I have no other chances just now; and as to letting Leslie think that I wanted him, I'd marry Lucifer first!"

Going down stairs, she found an offering from her lover awaiting her, a basket of Malaga grapes, the large honeyed globes of pale green resting on a bed of flowers. Such a gift would be easy to procure in the city, but in a country-place it was rare. Carter, after passing a night of sleepless rapture, had risen early and gone out to waylay the incoming stagecoach, and be the first to get the grapes. Then he had gone to a friend for the flowers, making no secret of their destination.

"I fancy something has happened," Mrs. Adams, her friend, said slyly, while Carrie rejoiced over her present. "Wont you tell us. See, your breakfast is all laid on the little table in the sitting-room. The others are off these two hours; but I wouldn't have you waked."

"Will you keep the secret?" Carrie asked.

Of course the lady promised.

"You see he offered himself, and is, O, desperately in love!" Carrie said, sweetening her coffee, and stopping between the words to eat a grape or two. "So I promised to think of it."

The truth was, she had promised herself to him unconditionally, but she did not want that to be known.

That his lady-love wavered, prevaricated, or lied outright about her relations with him, Henry Carter never dreamed. He

trusted her entirely. That she should be shy about owning their engagement, he did not wonder. Was she not modest and timid? On his own side, he was too proud and reserved to make a confidant of any one, but he was willing people should be sure without being told. So he was a little disappointed when he found that Carrie not only did not wish any announcement to be made for the present, but that she wished to conceal their relations. But of course he yielded. After all, was he not happy enough?

"We were together yesterday afternoon and last evening," she said; "and people would be sure to tease if we went to the lecture together to-night. You must go alone, and come to-morrow and tell me about it."

Well, it was bliss to have a lovely little lady of his own to obey; so, after the first slight pain and mortification of her refusal, he brightened again. But, while he sat listening to the lecture that night, and striving to attend, and call back his truant thoughts from the blue eyes and the smiling lips that—O, bliss beyond any he had ever hoped for!—he had kissed the night before, something was going on at Mrs. Adams's that would have changed his blood to poison could he have seen.

About eight o'clock Mrs. Adams's door-bell rang. Carrie sat alone, reading a novel, the family being all out. "Dear me!" she thought, putting her feet down out of a chair where they had been perched in rather gentlemanlike fashion; "I do hope he hasn't come back."

The door opened, and Mr. Sewel Leslie entered. She started up with a crimson blush, foreseeing at once that there was to be a complication of affairs. "Why aren't you at the lecture?" she asked, confusedly.

"Why aren't you there?" he retorted, smiling.

"I didn't want to go," she pouted, resuming her seat, and casting her eyes down; "I wanted to read a novel."

"Am I in the way?" he asked, with a slight laugh.

She glanced at him a saucy yes, but her countenance changed immediately. She was piercingly sorry for that yes that she had spoken the night before. Here, at last, was the lover she wanted, brought to bay, and she did not want the other. She didn't want to be stood on a pedestal and

worshipped; she didn't want to be a heroine. She wanted to marry a gay good-looking fellow, and be petted by him, and think of her clothes and her dinner, instead of stupid sublimities that she didn't understand. So, after that first saucy glance, her lips worked, her bosom heaved, and, to her own, as well as her companion's surprise, she burst into tears.

"Why, Carrie! What is the matter?" he exclaimed, seating himself beside her.

"I don't see what you wanted to come here for!" she sobbed. "I should think you would be at the lecture with Corde White."

He smiled at her jealousy. "I came because I wanted to see you, and I didn't care to see Corde. We are good enough friends, but I don't love her, nor she me."

"Any one would think, to see you yesterday, that you cared about her!" Carrie cried, still more passionately.

He leaned nearer and touched her arm. "Do you care much whether I like her or not?" he asked, softly.

"No, I don't! I don't care anything about you!" she answered, flinging his hand away. This insinuating address, this asking for assurances, but giving none, jarred on her, after the worship of Henry Carter. Leslie was trying to make her come every step of the way, and she would not.

Instead of being angry, he prisoned the repulsing hand, and, drawing her reluctant form to his bosom, kissed her cheek and her wet eyelids.

For one desperate moment she lay there, snatching a brief happiness; then she burst forth with the terrible news, "O Sewel! I am engaged to Henry Carter."

Leslie dropped her hand, withdrew his arm as if the touch of her were poison, and sat back.

"I couldn't help it!" she said, crying again. "I saw you with Corde's head on your shoulder, and you never looked at me. I don't love him, and I won't have him!"

Leslie was not unprincipled nor weak; but he liked this girl better than he had thought, and since she loved him, it was still harder to give her up. When she clung to him, and vowed that she had not meant to promise that she would marry him or no one, he wavered, hesitated, and finally agreed with her that her engage-

ment must be broken the very next day.

"It wouldn't be right for you to marry him without loving him," he said. "Carter never would forgive you that. The sooner you do it the better. Tell him in the morning."

Carrie was as cowardly as she was false. She dared not face the man she had wronged, and own to that wrong. The only way was to write a note, and she wrote it. She waited tremblingly through the day for an answer, but none came. She listened at evening for a step, and heard none. "I wish Sewel had come up to-night," she said to Mrs. Adams. "But he is so strict he wouldn't come till he knew that all was settled."

Leslie's strictness saved his life that night; for in the first frenzy of his despair, Henry Carter, after hiding all day, had posted himself, pistol in hand, where he could see every one that entered Mrs. Adams's gate, determined to shoot his rival.

Fortunately, perhaps (for we know the end), Leslie kept the resolution he had made. Neither that night nor the next day did he visit Carrie. He was, indeed, a little provoked with her, and had a mind to let her get out of the scrape as best she might.

Carter watched all that night, then went home and hid all day. In his fury of disappointed love and mortified pride, he believed that the whole town was mocking him. His heart was rent. The falling fabric of his hopes had crushed him. He lay and groaned in rage and agony.

After two or three days it was known that Carter had left town, and then Leslie visited his lady-love. They had waited a proper time for an answer to the note, and now they considered the affair settled. And so the wooing sped. But some reports that reached them from the next town clouded their joy at times. Carter was there, and was going to destruction rapidly. He was very dissipated, and one who had seen him described his appearance as that of a maniac.

The winter passed, and spring came. By this time all the matrimonial affairs had been settled. The railroad was a matter that was to be commenced at once. So it was worth while for the young people to settle on Carrie's land, which was close to the projected track. In the midst of that

fifty acres of wilderness young Leslie had put up a hasty cottage, and he had begun to cultivate the ground as soon as the frost was out in the spring. Carrie was willing. She was enough in love with her promised husband to go even to that lonely place with him, particularly as it was not always to be lonely.

The house went up like a mushroom under the vigorous superintendence of the lover; Carrie's mother took on herself to furnish it, and on the first of July they were married. There was no bridal tour. The wedding was a gay one at the farm, with a crowd of guests, then a small company escorted the young couple to their new home.

The mushroom was a very pretty affair, a tiny cottage in the midst of the woods. Three cosy little rooms below, and two chambers above, made up the establishment. Near by was a huge barn, a cow-house with a cow in it, and a henhouse full of poultry. There were cleared spots about that had been planted, patches of corn, potatoes, wheat, and other produce. All was rough and wild, but full of promise and activity.

The inside of the house was more civilized-looking. There Carrie's tasty hand had been at work. Carpets, rugs, muslin curtains, pretty chairs, tables, pictures and little knickknacks about. And prettier than all was the young bride, with her blooming face and white dress, presiding for the first time at her own tea-table.

The supper was over, the guests departed, and the young couple were left to themselves in their forest nook. It was like being in a new country. Near as the village was, and though there were some small farms still nearer, no sight or sound of civilized life reached them. The tall forest trees stood looming above them in every direction, seeming to creep nearer as darkness fell. The insects piped in the sultry air, the birds stirred uneasily in their nests, troubled by the heat. The darkness grew deeper, and stars trembled out, at first faintly beaming in the violet sky, then burning with intense lustre in a purple darkness.

"It is the garden of Eden, Carrie," the bridegroom said, as he sat with his bride, looking out into the night.

Carrie laughed. She always did laugh at anything which she called a fine speech.

"I hope the garden of Eden wasn't so fearfully hot as this is," she said. "It's hot enough anywhere this month, but here the woods shut out every breath of air. I move we have a nest in the treetops like the birds."

Mr. Wilson's house was about as far west of the village as his daughter's was east of it, the two being on high land, the village dipping to a river. It was late when the father and mother reached home that night, after their daughter's wedding. They were naturally somewhat wakeful and excited. Carrie was their eldest child, and they were proud and fond of her. They liked her husband and respected him; they were in every way satisfied with him for a son-in-law; but still, every girl risks something in marrying, and they could not help feeling a certain anxious care for her future, as well as a sense of loss, now that she had gone from them. They lay awake a long time, talking the matter over.

"Lennie is an enterprising fellow, and will make a fortune," the father said. "He is going to buy another fifty acres, and he says that in ten years he will have the finest farm in the State. Then, one of these days, as land grows more valuable, and building increases, he can cut it up into house-lots."

"I'm not afraid of Sewel's not making a good living," the mother replied. "But I hope he will not be so taken up with money-getting as to forget to be kind to Carrie. After all, the most important thing in a house is love, and money is only second. Still, I think he's a good-hearted fellow, and fond of her."

"O mother! you women all set love above bread and butter," the husband laughed, but not ill-pleased; "but bread and butter are very good things to have in a house, and I tell you, love soon grows weak without 'em."

About two o'clock Mr. Wilson started from his first drowse, hearing himself spoken to.

"I don't know what makes me feel so, father," his wife said; "I can't sleep for my life. The moment I begin to lose myself it seems to me that some one pulls my sleeve, or screams close in my ear. It's like the nightmare."

"Get out of bed and turn round," said the husband, sleepily. "You can always drive away a nightmare by walking round a little while."

Mrs. Wilson obediently got up and walked about, to change the state she had got into. She went to the chamber door and looked out into the entry and down stairs, to make sure that there were no burglars in the house; then she went to the window, and looked at the sky and off eastward, to where her daughter was.

"Father?" she said, presently, in a quick low tone.

He was already nearly asleep, but some particular sharpness in the voice aroused him.

"Come and look out here," she said, in the same strange startled voice.

He got up and went to the window.

"See over east, and tell me what it looks like," she said. "Look at the woods."

Mr. Wilson looked, holding his breath, not daring to speak till he should be sure. It took but a moment for certainty. What had at first been only a few faintly luminous spots in the woods, suddenly shot up in columns of fire. The woods in the direction of Carrie Leslie's house were on fire in several places.

"My God! they're as dry as tinder!" he cried out, beginning to dress. "Run, wife, and get the horse harnessed. The fire will be all about them! How on earth did those fires come to be lighted?"

Mrs. Wilson did not stop to answer questions. She ran down, roused the hired man, and herself preceded him to the barn. When he came out the horse was already half harnessed. "Go with Mr. Wilson," she said. "A man can do more than a woman."

She did not say that she should follow; but when the two had driven furiously away, she dressed herself and started. The night was dark, and the road lonely, but she thought not of that. On she hurried toward the village, making eagerly for those places on the road from which there was a view of the opposite hill. Each view gave her a new thrill of terror; for at each one she saw the fire making headway. Instead of the first doubtful glow that she had seen from her window, broad sheets of flame rose in several different places, and the wind setting toward her, the smoke and sparks came into her face. Still on and on she hurried, a horrible fear and suspicion tugging at her heart. She knew Henry Carter better than others did, and though she had never spoken of it to any

one, she had argued ill of his continued silence, and had dreaded lest he should seek some revenge. Now she instantly connected him with the fire. By the time she reached the village a good many were astir. The woods were so near that in such dry weather a fire might endanger them, and already the night was brightly illuminated. Going on still, her last hope died out. The fire was near the road, and unless they got out beyond, and went up the road away from the village, they could only fly further and further into the woods. And when would their flight end? When would the devouring element, with fifty miles of solid heated fuel before it, stop in its course? Besides, the fire was in every direction. If it was set for them, then they were hemmed in beyond power of escape.

The mother kept on, praying and groaning as she went. The smoke and cinders came over her in clouds, but she did not stop for them. Through the near tree-trunks, as she reached the woods, she saw the red of flames, as though she looked into a glowing furnace, but she only pressed on the faster. Now and then, after a while, she had to stop, for the heat grew intense and the smoke blinded her. O, what must it be in the woods? How would they know which way to go, or guess where safety lay, so enveloped and confused? And where was her husband? she thought; a new terror added to the old.

Men from the village were on the road with her, and one begged her not to go on.

"You can do no good, and will only endanger yourself," he said. "It is likely that they have escaped up the road; and in that case, they will go as fast as they can. You won't be able to find them, and they won't come back until the way is clear."

"I cannot stop," she moaned. "I could see that the worst fire is beyond. If they get out, they will come this way."

"Then stop and wait for them here," he urged.

As he spoke there was the sound of galloping hoofs up the road, coming down towards them through the smoke.

"There they come!" cried the man, and drew Mrs. Wilson aside out of the way.

Scarcely had he done so when the carriage dashed past them. Mr. Wilson was driving, on his knees in the bottom of the buggy, leaning forward and whipping his

horse. On the seat sat two men, who held a quiet form in their arms.

"She has fainted," the man said, as Mrs. Wilson screamed out.

Those in the buggy took no notice of her scream, or of the people in the road. They rushed past in fierce haste, and the two turned and ran after them.

When Mrs. Wilson and her friend reached the village again, and ran down the principal street, a horse and buggy stood at the doctor's gate there, and the doctor's house was bright with lights moving about. The mother rushed through the yard, and in at the open door, following the light and sound of voices to the room where a dozen or so persons were assembled around a form lain on a sofa.

"It is no use; she is gone!" the doctor said.

The mother heard the words, and stood riveted to the threshold. She saw as in a dream a scorched and unrecognizable form lying there; she saw another standing over it wringing his hands, his hair and clothes burnt, his face blackened; she saw her husband kneeling beside the sofa, with his face hidden in his hands. Then all sight faded, and she swooned.

It was, indeed, true. Carrie Leslie had seen her last of earth on her wedding-night. Waked from sleep to find the fire all about them, cinders and smoke filling the air, and confusing them so that they knew not in which way safety lay, if in any, they had fled toward the road. The flames caught at them, the smoke choked them, and Carrie fell. Then her husband caught her in his arms, and fled on, only stopping when he reached the road. There a wave of smoke choked and suffocated him for a moment, and he fell; and there Mr. Wilson found them.

When morning came the whole town was covered with smoke, and hundreds of men were out fighting fire. It was days before a providential rain came and extinguished the flames; and by that time showers fell on the poor ill-fated bride's grave.

Mrs. Wilson had not dared to breathe her suspicions of the cause of the calamity. She was too much prostrated and shocked to allow herself to say a word. If her thought were true, what good would revenge bring her now? It could not restore her child, and it would only harrow up her

feelings anew. She would gladly think that she was wrong, and that the one who set the fires, for there was no doubt that they were purposely set, had done so in ignorance of what must be the consequences. She feared to put such an idea into the minds of her husband or son-in-law, believing it would drive them frantic.

Three days after the funeral a dead body was found in the river. It had evidently been there some time, and was discolored; but it was easily identified as Henry Carter's.

People looked at each other when they heard it. "Had he come there to drown himself, on getting the news of Carrie's death?" they asked. But inquiry proved that he had been missing since the day before that of the fire.

The news came to the farmhouse while the family sat at table Sunday morning. Mrs. Wilson looked quickly in her hus-

band's face as he looked at the messenger. A deep red flashed momentarily over its paleness. "He has only taken the job out of my hands," he said, sternly; and, drawing a pistol from his pocket, went and put it away in his room.

"He knew it, then?" exclaimed Leslie, looking at Mrs. Wilson.

"And you?" she cried out.

"I was sure, and I saw that you were," he answered. "But I didn't know that he had a thought."

So the revenge that loomed in those three minds, only biding its time, gathering breath and strength for action, was taken out of their hands, and Henry Carter's miserable life had been offered by himself for his own crime.

So much for one thoughtless little dear who meant to have a good time but didn't mean any harm. Poor thing! she paid dearly for her folly.



## IN THE WRONG BOX.

BY THEODORE ARNOLD.

FRED JONES, my Fred Jones, was and is one of the finest fellows in existence. Nearly six feet in height, with a good form which he has well in hand, his appearance is not only imposing, but prepossessing. You didn't see any great awkward hands and feet sprawling about when you looked at him, or any long arms and legs swinging loosely, as if they were sleeves and pantaloons in the wind, or any clumsy back louping over in a great round hunch. His hands and feet were well-sized and well-shaped, every motion of him was full of grace and simplicity, and his carriage was as straight as a cedar, but not so stiff as some cedars I have seen. As for beauty of face, he had enough; fine gray eyes, with, I must own, rather extravagant eyelashes, a good nose, long enough and slightly raised in the middle, only the line of beauty, a decidedly good forehead and mouth, and

thick chestnut hair, that he had a way of combing back with his ten fingers and thumbs. But Fred's good looks were not the best of him. He had a good heart and brain, was one of the best engineers in town, and couldn't be mean nor hard, if he should try.

One summer he took a vacation, the first in six years. He had made his own way in the world, and had been too busy working to have time for recreation. But he was now getting on so well that he treated himself. After looking about a little he decided upon visiting a pretty village among the hills, where he would find trout-fishing, a little gentle gunning, and country fare. Besides, he would be among strangers; and he had lived such a busy life that he really longed to be quiet to himself a while, and free to do and go without reference to any one else.

So one July afternoon beheld him step

from the stage-coach, on to the platform of Rockland House, in Seldon. There were heads in all the windows looking out as he and his fellow-passengers alighted, a small group of loungers at one end of the long piazza, and mine host, bowing and smiling on the steps, and looking as delighted as if his long-absent brothers and sisters had returned to his arms, and were at that moment approaching him from the steps of the Leighton and Seldon accommodation.

Fred was delighted with the looks of everything. The lovely view of hills, with a glistening thread of river on one side, and a smooth-gleaming pond on the other, the pretty village street with gardens about every house, the wide cool piazza of the hotel, the clean look of everything, and the smiling face of the landlord.

Never had he been so waited on, not even when he was mistaken for a German count, at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. The landlord escorted him to the book to enter his name, remarking that he would not put him to the trouble of writing it, but he liked to have his visitors' autographs; he placed three different rooms at his choice, he offered him refreshments immediately, though the passengers were always supposed to dine at Leighton, fifteen miles away; he bowed and smiled with painful profuseness, he even treated Fred's trunk with distinguished consideration.

"Confound it!" thought Fred. "I can't stand this. If he doesn't stop his compliments by to-morrow, I'll bolt. I can't take time and strength to return all these bows."

The room he selected was the very best in the house, a corner front that had a fine view west and north. It struck Fred as a little odd that this room should not have been taken before, for there was company at the house, and the price was anything but exorbitant. The best place at the table seemed also to be vacant for his benefit, and if there was a particularly choice dish, it was always near his plate.

"Mighty comfortable," said Fred, to himself; "but I wish folks wouldn't stare at me so, and be so outrageously polite. I'd rather be let alone."

He soon noticed, however, that there was one person who was a shining exception to the general complacency with which the household regarded him, and that one was the very one whose attention he would have preferred. Just opposite him sat a grumpy old lady who ordered everybody about, but

who was very civil to him, and beside her was a girl who would be noticed anywhere. See her in rags, and you would still call her a lady. She was not especially handsome, though her form was exquisite, but she was beautiful with that beauty which consists in grace, spirit, refinement and sweetness. This girl sat and ate her meals without once looking at him, though she talked pleasantly to others. She seemed, indeed, to purposely avoid noticing him, and showed a faint coldness, almost amounting to haughtiness, when her aunt referred to him. This couple, Mrs. Conway and Miss Richmond, interested him more than any one else; were, in fact, the only ones who did interest him.

The first evening, after supper, Fred escaped from his adorers, and took a long walk about the town, stood beside the river, the pond, went up a hill, and took a look at all the principal buildings. The latter were nearly all what village architecture is likely to be when it tries to be grand—cheaply pretentious. But there was one exception. In a beautiful and commanding position, at the intersection of the two principal streets of the town, was a large estate with a square brick house in it, embedded in gardens and trees, one of the most delightful places in the world. There was an air of comfortable wealth about it that was very pleasant, and the taste of the proprietor was evidently good. Fred liked the looks of it so well that he stopped a boy who was passing by, as he leaned and looked over the fence into the gardens, and asked whose the place was.

"Squire Severns's," the boy said, evidently glad to be questioned. "He's the richest man in town."

Fred saw that he had only to ask in order to get a full history of the Severns family, root and branch. He had no notion, however, of satisfying any person's gabbling propensity, and no curiosity to know who Mr. Severns's grandmother was, or what they had for dinner. So he left the boy with his mouth open, and the story all ready to burst forth from his throat, and went back to the hotel.

It was nine o'clock, and nearly all the family were out on the veranda or the green, getting all the air and coolness they could. He avoided them, and went into the parlor which the ladies and gentlemen shared together, the gentlemen going to the barroom when indisposed for the society of ladies. The room, instead of being vacant, as he had hoped, had a group at one of the front win-

dows. Mrs. Conway and Miss Richmond sat each in an armchair, and between them stood the landlord, and a strange gentleman, rather a consequential person.

Fred would have turned upon his heel and gone up to his own room, if Miss Richmond had not been there; but he wanted to see her, perhaps to speak to her. So he went in, and, bowing slightly as they all glanced round, went to another window, and stood looking out. The landlord came to him immediately.

"Squire Severns would be happy to be introduced to you, Mr. Jones," he announced, in a stage whisper. "Will you come over to him and the ladies?"

"What in thunder does Squire Severns know about me!" he thought, but said nothing; only followed the landlord to the other window, and underwent an introduction.

The squire received him like a son, shook his hand warmly, hoped he liked the town, was sure he was comfortable at the Seldon house, ahem!—with a bow to the landlord—and in such excellent company—bowing to the ladies, the elder of whom nodded in return, and the younger turned her head disdainfully away, and looked out of the window. He hoped that Mr. Jones would stay long enough in Seldon to explore all its beauties, and to facilitate that end he offered any information and assistance in his power to give.

Fred bowed in speechless astonishment, wondering if the millennium had come, or if this was one of those places which had never heard of sin and sorrow, or if he were really such a tremendously attractive and delightful fellow that people couldn't resist him. Being no fool, and quite up to the tricks of the world, he also wondered if all these people had a little land which they wanted surveyed for nothing.

"I should be happy to have you come up and see my place, Mr. Jones," the squire continued. "It will not seem imposing to you, who are accustomed to metropolitan residences, but you may find it pleasant. It is, at least, homelike, and we shall be most happy to see you there. I speak for my wife and daughters, as well as for myself."

The young man's acknowledgements of this generous hospitality were somewhat interrupted by Miss Richmond, who rose with an air bordering on impatience, stepped on to the piazza through the long window, and walked off down the garden path. Fred waited, and made himself agreeable to the company, hoping that she would come back,

but she did not. After a while he saw her come in through the hall, and go up stairs.

After that the conversation lost interest for him, and he got rid of his company with none too much ceremony, and went up to his room. He had a vague idea that he had made countless engagements with the squire, that he was to drive, dine and walk with him, that gardens, orchards and conservatories were at his disposal; but all that slipped out of his mind when he heard a soft voice singing lowly across the passage. Holding his breath he listened to the dreamy melody, and even set his door an inch ajar to hear the better. Presently the old lady came up and went into Miss Richmond's room, leaving the door open.

"It is so hot!" she panted. "We must have the draft. Bring a chair, Clara, and put it so the door won't fly open. We can leave it so all night, in this patriarchal place."

"But, aunt," the young lady replied, "that Mr. Jones's room is opposite."

The tone of disdain in which "that Mr. Jones" was mentioned made Fred's blood boil. He got up with a firm step, and banged his door to, and then was sorry for it the next minute. "It will just show that I overheard a conversation that was not intended for me," he thought.

He sat a while considering, trying not to feel mortified at the tone taken by Miss Richmond, and wondering at himself for caring about it. Then he started up with a laugh, and prepared to go to bed. "I will go about my business, just as I meant to when I came," he muttered. "And if people want to lionize me or to snub me, they can. I will pay no attention to either."

Then, with a good conscience and a firm resolve, he went to sleep, and never woke till the bell rang in the morning.

For a week Fred lived in clover. He was at Squire Severns's every day. He dined there, took tea there, spent the evening there, went to ride with the daughters, three gay flirting girls, who made eyes at him outrageously, and was patted on the shoulder by papa, and on the arm by mamma. If he wanted to visit some particular spot in the neighborhood, they made a picnic there. If he preferred to lounge, some one of them read or played to him. There were moonlight rambles, in which he was nearly always allowed an excellent opportunity to talk sentiment to one or other of the young ladies. He found himself rather beset, indeed, and

had to defend his heart and hand with great caution. Still it was pleasant. The only blot on his enjoyment was the constant presence and as constant coldness of Miss Richmond. She was an old friend of the Severns, and spent a great deal of time with them.

All this time Fred noticed several things that seemed to him rather odd in the conversation of the people he met. If he mentioned a word about his business, they stared as if they didn't know what he meant, and they frequently alluded to his visiting that humble locality, as if it were wonderful that he could content himself there, when so many gayer attractions wooed him elsewhere. He carefully held his tongue after the first intimation of these mysteries, and waited to see what would happen.

"It seems to me so odd that you have never been to Europe, Mr. Jones," Miss Anne Severns said. "I should have supposed you had been there certainly once, perhaps more." And she gazed at him with an admiring smile, as if she thought him quite worthy of having a steamer always at his disposal for going to any part of the world he might fancy to see.

"What on earth should make her wonder at it!" he thought; but he only said, carelessly, "I mean to become familiar with my own country first."

"Clara Richmond has been there twice," she added, and though her manner was as sweet as ever, he saw a keen look in her bright eyes.

In spite of himself he colored. Did she suspect that he was interested in that young lady?

"She is then wealthy?" he asked, with an affectation of carelessness. He had often thought he would like to know.

The young lady dropped her eyes, and her face was not quite so sunny. "Mrs. Conway is rich," she replied, dryly. "I believe Clara has only a few hundreds a year of her own. But she acts and dresses quite like an heiress, don't you think so?"

"I really do not know," Fred said; and, indeed, he could not recollect a single garment he had seen Miss Richmond wear.

"She does," Miss Severns went on. "She is fond of dress, and of wealth. I don't blame her, I'm sure. But she will have to marry money."

This last remark was accompanied by a look that set Fred's heart on fire. "A young lady who would marry for money is unworthy

the name of woman!" he exclaimed, indignantly.

He expected to see Miss Severns angry. Instead of that, she seemed delighted. All her smiles and sunshine returned. But he was by no means in a smiling mood. There was no hiding from himself that in one short week he had fallen desperately in love with a girl who disdained him, and whose worldly advantages placed her beyond his reach, even if she did not. He was angry and astonished at himself. He was frightened too. Well he knew the strength of his own feelings, and how such a passion was likely to possess him. He tried to think that he would go away directly, but the thought of leaving her gave his heart a wrench which made him almost faint. His life had been too busy for love, but now his time had come, and the slavery was more utter, in that it had been postponed.

They were on a picnic to the hills, and it was the view which had brought up the talk about scenery in general, and lastly, European scenery in particular. Fred and Miss Anne were by themselves, in a little dell, from which the land rose abruptly, braced with rocks, and almost shut out the light. Some one called Miss Severns. She glanced at Fred. "I will stay here," he said, rather coldly; so she went, not over-pleased.

He stood and looked absently at a dancing little brook that flowed past his feet, and as he stood a light step came near. He knew Miss Richmond's step, would have known it from a thousand. Some sharp tingle of anger mingled with his pain. Why should she have met his courtesies with coldness, refusing him even the ordinary notice that any indifferent acquaintance has a claim on.

The step came nearer, but he would not look up. How often had she turned away rather than salute him, and affected unconsciousness of his presence while he was waiting for some acknowledgment of it! She should not think that he was hungrily waiting now for a glance.

An abrupt pause showed that she perceived him, then she went on, evidently turning out of her path for the sake of avoiding him. He raised his eyes quickly, and looked after her, longing to follow. Her dress gleamed whitely in the forest shadows, and the long gauze scarf on her hat floated back, as if beckoning him. She stopped and bent to gather a flower, and rising again glanced back at him. Was it his fancy, or did her fair cheek color sud-

denly? A lady does not like to be caught looking back at a gentleman, and in this case the gentleman was vexed at being himself caught. "She wants to make sure that I do not follow," he thought, putting the worst construction on her look.

Perhaps, indeed, the girl was a little surprised at his not noticing her, and giving her that opportunity of slighting him which she had not failed invariably to take advantage of. At any rate, she revenged herself by not seeing him all the way home, though they rode in the same carriage.

"You're going home to tea with us, Mr. Jones?" the Misses Severns said, in chorus.

No, he was not going. *He had letters to write, he had something to do, he had a score of excuses.*

"It's too bad!" exclaimed Anne, tossing her flaxen chignon. "And Clara has refused too. Is it a plot between you?"

Miss Richmond opened her blue eyes haughtily, and in scathing her friend, gave Fred also a short flash, as if he were to blame. "It is so little of a plot, Anne," she said, "that I may change my mind. I will go to tea with you, if you will let me now."

It was a little too much. Fred had always taken her hits in embarrassed humility. He now lifted his head and gave her a look as cold and haughty as her own.

"My refusal has really nothing to do with any other person, Miss Anne," he said. "I was not thinking of any one else. I am going away from Seldon in a few days, and I must write to let them know at home."

Fred went to his hotel in a white heat, and entered the door so abruptly that he nearly knocked down a young man who was just coming out. Both drew back, Fred apologized, and the other rubbed his head.

"Confound it!" said the stranger. "I do not know whether I'll excuse you or not. A man ought not to go like a locomotive, unless he has a track all to himself. My forehead is black and blue, I know it is."

Something in this suited Fred's mood. If the man had bowed and smiled it would have irritated him; but this whimsical crossness, which seemed more like a boy than a man, made him smile.

"I will rub your forehead with vinegar," he said, gravely. "And I will promise not to run against you again. What more can I do to prove my regret?"

The stranger stopped rubbing and stared at him. "Who are you?" he asked, with a

frank curiosity, which took the abruptness from the question.

"Fred Jones, at your service," responded Fred, bowing lowly.

"Why, by George! I'm Fred Jones!" exclaimed the other, excitedly. "What's the meaning of it? You don't look enough like like me to be my double."

"There must be two of us," said Fred, beginning to see that a mistake had been made. "I have evidently been the proprietor of the name longer than you have, and shall not give it up. But I suspect that I have been unconsciously appropriating some attentions which belonged to you."

"What do you mean?" demanded No. 2. "Come into the parlor and explain. I don't know a soul here. Come!"

Fred went into the parlor, and told the history of his week in Seldon, leaving out, however, all mention of Clara Richmond. He liked his new acquaintance immensely.

"Couldn't have been for me, for I don't know a soul," No. 2 protested, when the story was told. "They must be tremendously good-natured people. But, now, how are we going to do about the name? One of us must leave town, or else we must be numbered."

The new-comer was several years younger than Fred, was dashing, willful, like a petted child, and had evidently a very good opinion of himself. He was also rich. That could be seen at a glance. The daintiness of person and dress did not belong to one who labored, the whole air was that of a man whose wishes had never been thwarted. Fred saw the glitter of a large diamond in the top of his watch-key, and noticed that his handkerchief was of wonderful fineness.

"He is *the* Fred Jones!" he concluded, in his own mind. "And I am in the wrong box. But that doesn't make any difference about Clara Richmond."

The thought of her sent him up stairs, where he sat smoking disconsolately at his window, when she came home, with Squire Severns acting gallantly as escort.

They passed under Fred's window in reaching the door, and he distinctly heard the squire's voice. "A most extraordinary thing, my dear Miss Richmond. The young man came this afternoon, while you were out, and this other must be an impostor."

"I don't think that likely," responded Miss Richmond's clear voice. "It is simply a mistake. Mr. Jones has made no pretences

whatsoever. I am not aware that he has claimed to be a rich man. The trouble is that you all took for granted that he was. There are, doubtless, two Mr. Fred Joneses."

"There's one too many in this town," was the mental comment with which the listener tossed his cigar out the window.

The next morning Fred went down to breakfast rather late, and found his namesake seated in his place at the head of the table, chatting in the most charming manner with Mrs. Conway, who nodded her head at him, and laughed at his jokes, and was too busy for some time to see Mr. Jones No. 1.

"I am very happy to yield you my seat, sir!" said Fred, stiffly.

"Am I in your seat?" asked the other. "Well, I didn't know. The landlord put me here, and pushed my chair in, like a waiter. You don't want me to get up now, do you?"

It was impossible to be angry with such a good-natured fellow. Fred took the second seat, and had the pleasure of seeing, before the breakfast was over, that he was utterly dethroned. A cool civility took the place of all the bows and smiles that had been meant for the genuine Mr. Jones. Everybody appeared to feel that somehow he was an impostor, because they had made a mistake. It seemed as though nothing but the extreme friendliness and respect which the real Mr. Jones showed him saved him from absolute rudeness.

Fred's spirit was up. To retreat under the circumstances would be cowardice. He stayed and went about his business just as he had at first intended to, and this time nobody interfered with him. The Severns invited him, but in such an embarrassed way, and with such readiness to take his excuses, that he ceased going there. "It is awkward having two of a name," he said, and stayed away.

But at last he had what he came for—long wood rambles in the stillness of perfect solitude. It was far more delightful than the stale flirtations and sentimentalities of the Misses Severns.

There was one companion, though, in his rambles, whom he had not looked for. The image of Clara Richmond haunted him; not in the haughty guise in which she had first appeared to him, but with the wistful eyes, that often sought his now, and would not become angry at his cold avoidance, with the soft voice with which she often addressed him when he would scarcely notice her.

"She pities me because I am slighted," he

thought, his cheeks burning with angry pride. "I will let her see that she mistakes. What are these people to me? I have friends who are wealthier and higher in life than any of them. And if I am poor now, I may not be so always."

It was true, the people were nothing to him, and he was quite well enough connected, and quite philosopher enough, to laugh at these whims; but that this girl should pity him, as if it were in the power of these country folks to disturb his serenity, that was cruel. No man worthy of the name enjoys being pitied, and Fred liked it less than most.

But all his coldness and pride did not chill the tender heart that was so oppressed with the memory of its own misdeeds toward him. She was determined to speak to him.

"If you don't want to speak to me, you need not; but I wish you would," she said one morning as he passed her on the veranda, on his way to the woods. Her manner, in spite of its pretty archness, had a touch of soft entreaty and sadness.

"Why do you wish I would?" he asked, standing beside her, and looking down in her face.

The color flickered in her cheeks. "Because I think you worth talking with."

"I should have judged quite the contrary," he replied, with a touch of coldness, but softening, too.

She glanced about and saw that they were alone. "I owe you an apology," she said, hastily, her face reddening, her eyes filling with tears. "And I owe you an explanation. We all heard that a Mr. Fred Jones was coming here, that he was very wealthy, and that he had seen my photograph somewhere, and was coming to see me. I didn't like the talk it made. Anne Severns heard it all from a friend who wrote to her. Anne jested about my—well, no matter! I made up my mind before you came that I would not speak to you, and when I saw what court everybody paid to you, merely because they thought you were rich, I was disgusted, and I visited their faults on you. Forgive me!"

This was poured forth in rapid words and an impassioned tone, and at the last she raised her eyes, overflowing with tears, to his face.

The look and the sudden change in her almost took his breath. "I more than forgive you!" he exclaimed, and turned his head away, lest he should say more.

There was a moment of silence; then he

said, "Wont you come out for a walk? The morning is lovely."

She started up brightly, ran for her hat, and in a few minutes they were walking down the village street side by side, as happy and cheerful as two children.

"May I ask you a question?" said Fred.

"Surely!" was the cordial reply.

"Why did you change your mind about the rich Jones when he came? You have not been cool with him"

"Because he was friendly to you," she answered, promptly, then blushed at her own admission.

Fred said nothing then. Whether he said more when they were out of the village street, and walking in the lovely summer woods, we must guess. But when they came home, late to dinner, Miss Richmond, it was observed, went up stairs and stayed there, and Mr. Jones really did not see any one at the table, though he sat there, and Mrs. Conway had to ask him twice where Clara was before he heard her.

After dinner was over Jones No. 2 came into No. 1's room, and threw himself down very disconsolately.

"I may as well give up, I see," he said, lugubriously. "I really did take a shine to Clara's picture, but—well— I wish you joy."

"Thank you!" said Fred, with a brilliant smile. "But don't be down-hearted. Wont one of the Severns girls do?"

"Plague take 'em!" the young man cried

out. "What do they court a fellow so for? And the old folks fairly hug me, I declare they do! I dare say they did the same by you. I'm sick of 'em. I mean to go away."

And go away he did, to the despair of the landlord and the squire's family, and Fred was the only Jones there.

When he went back to town, after a vacation twice as long as he had intended to take, he escorted Miss Richmond and Mrs. Conway.

The old lady was a little sulky at first, but she liked his independence, and she could not resist her niece's coaxing.

"Besides," she said, "I never placed wealth above family. And Fred's family is really excellent."

"I'd rather have your consent," Fred said, "but I'm determined to have Clara!" putting his arm around the young lady as he spoke.

"And I'm determined to have him," Miss Richmond responded.

"Well, upon my word!" exclaimed the old lady, scandalized but helpless.

Well, that was years ago, when old folks might think Fred no great catch. But he prospered. Happiness agreed with him, and if wealth is in the eyes of the reader a sign of success, let him or her go to Highblood Street, and see the brown-stone house in which Mr. and Mrs. Fred Jones live. It hasn't its superior in the city. As to the Severns girls, who are not invited there, their eyes turn green when they see it.

## "IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN."

BY CLARA LE CLERC.

"We mourn in secret o'er some buried love  
In the far past, whence love does not return,  
And strive to find among its ashes gray  
Some lingering spark that may yet live and  
burn;

And when we see the vainness of our task,  
We flee away, far from the hopeless scene,  
And folding close our garments o'er our hearts,  
Cry to the winds, 'O God! it might have  
been!'"

"Come, darling, sing my favorite, and then  
I must leave you!" And drawing his be-  
trothed gently forward, Arthur Falkner seat-  
ed her upon one of the low wicker chairs,  
which was almost concealed by the clinging  
star jasmine and scarlet cypress, shading the  
tiny bird-nest affair of a porch.

She had followed him to the door, and  
they had both stood in the doorway, silently,  
for several minutes, watching the fair moon,  
as with her mellow beams she cast many  
and fantastic shadows upon the broad walk,  
and peering shyly through the twining vines  
upon the lattice, played "hide and seek" on  
the snowy floor.

'Twas a sweet picture. The fair June  
night, with its soft sweet breezes, fleecy  
clouds, dewy moonshine, and pair of lovers.

"Yes, sing, *ma petite*, I so long to hear  
my song to-night." And seating himself at  
the girl's side, he prisoned one of the small  
fair hands, and looked upon the pale face,  
with its sweet mouth and full red lips, dark  
gray eyes and heavy brows, the low but in-  
tellectual forehead, and small beautifully-  
shaped head, with its crown of black hair,  
with a world of admiration in his dark eyes.  
No, Carrie Leslie was not beautiful, not even  
pretty, but she appeared to her betrothed,  
Arthur Dean Falkner, as infinitely lovely.

The gray eyes were raised for a moment,  
and meeting the ardent gaze of those dark  
ones bending over her, a rosy flush suffused  
cheek and brow, and hastily withdrawing  
her hand, she pressed it to her forehead,  
murmuring softly, "Don't, Arthur; you will  
spoil me by your flattery."

With a merry laugh, which so well har-  
monized with the bright manly face, dark  
deep eyes which laughed in unison, and the  
snowy teeth which gleamed through the

silky mustache, he caught and carried the  
little trembling hand to his lips; then, with  
a gentle caress, kept it a prisoner, as he lis-  
tened, almost breathlessly, to the sweet  
words of that old but ever beautiful song,  
"Twenty years ago." What a sweet voice,  
and how softly it rose and fell upon the si-  
lence of the fair summer night!

"Thanks, dearest; I must have a sweet  
kiss for that." And rising from his seat, he  
passed his arm gently about the young girl  
and drew her up beside him, at the same  
time pressing a warm loving kiss upon her  
red lips.

Why did her cheeks, but a moment before  
crimson with blushes which his words had  
called into them, blanch so suddenly? Why  
did the happy lovelight fade from her eyes,  
the loving smile die upon her lips, as, with  
a shudder, she sank her head upon his arm,  
and deep sobs shook her slender frame?

"Why, darling, what is the matter?" he  
exclaimed, looking down upon the tiny fig-  
ure, seeming lovelier, and almost ethereal,  
in the soft moonlight. "What is it, dearest,  
tell me?"

The young girl lifted her tearful face to  
his, and the expression written there was  
one never to be forgotten. Such deep agony  
upon the fair brow, and in the depths of  
those tearful eyes; and, the lips, those bright-  
red lips he so loved to press, were no longer  
red, but a cold purple; and the sweet mouth  
twitched convulsively. She did not speak  
for some moments, but at length, with a  
strong effort, she repressed her tears.

"Arthur," she commenced, agitatedly, but  
gathering calmness as she proceeded, "dear-  
est Arthur! forgive me, but I fear that I may  
offend you in what I am going to say; rest  
assured it can give you no more pain to hear,  
than it will give me to say the words that  
will trouble and perhaps offend you; but re-  
member it is the very intenseness of my love  
that impels me to speak. O, my own Ar-  
thur! will you not thrust aside this great  
enemy which is winding its strong fetters  
closer and yet closer around you? Will you  
not declare eternal war against its insidious  
influence? O Arthur! Look not upon the  
wine when it is red, when it giveth its color



in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; for at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder!"

She paused, clasped her small hands closer about his arm, and looked pleadingly into his face. That low eager voice, those pleading tear-filled eyes, were appealing to his heart almost as irresistibly as the words she had spoken.

He unclasped her hands and held them tenderly in his own. His face grew grave and thoughtful; and there arose before him a picture of the brilliantly-lighted saloon, the sparkling wine and card-table, the merry company, whose favorite he was fast becoming, and his heart became sad, restless; he felt and acknowledged that all these things possessed a charm for him; and the words of his betrothed sank into his heart, awakening doubts as to his ability to resist evil.

Suddenly, withdrawing her hands from his, she clasped them, and raising her eyes to heaven, continued:

"Arthur, never was there a heart truer, purer than mine. All my affection would I sacrifice to you; but by the fair June moon above us, and the whispering breeze around us, I had rather look upon this loved face no more, hear that voice with its matchless music call me endearing names never again, than have you continue in the path you are now treading. "Promise, Arthur, dear Arthur, that you will abandon the evil, that these haunts shall know you no more! and prove to this loving, trusting heart your love!"

Very tenderly, very reverently, he placed his arm around the gentle form, and as tears filled his softened eyes, he answered, earnestly:

"I will, my Carrie, my darling! do you doubt me? I do not think there can be much danger; but since you wish, and for your sake, my darling, your gentle soul shall never be so pained again. I do promise you to-night, by our beautiful love and bright hopes, that never again shall you have cause to fear! No, if I should break this solemn pledge, may I, my Carrie, lose your sweet love forever! Let me seal the pledge thus." And he crushed his lips upon the two fair clasped hands.

"My own Carrie, I am not worthy such great, such beautiful love. Lead me by thy gentle Christian spirit, that I may become a better and a truer man."

"Arthur, never a prayer ascends from my

heart, but that it wafts to our Father's throne a fervent petition for you, who are so dear to me. Often, often, do I fear that my love for the creature excels that for the Creator, for which he refuses to answer prayer. But I pray that he may crown thy life with that bright jewel without which you cannot enter into life eternal. God bless you, Arthur, dear Arthur!" And the girl lifted the head bowed upon her shoulder, and pressed her pure lips to his brow, once, twice.

"Amen!" responded the young man, as he received the pure benediction. And catching up his hat from the wicker seat, he quitte the presence of his guardian angel.

Ah, Arthur Falkner, Arthur Falkner! If you had but retraced your steps and been a listener to Carrie Leslie, as dropping upon her knees, beside the low seat, beneath the quivering and wreathing vines, she poured forth her pure soul in prayer to the "All Powerful" for the safety of her betrothed.

Alas, alas! why could it not have been? Perhaps fountains of bitter tears might not have flowed; an ever stinging, goading remorse might not have taken up its abode in one heart's chamber.

\* \* \* \* \*

Twenty winters with their chill winds and shuddering rains; twenty summers with their sweet flowers, singing birds and gentle breezes, had come and gone, each placing its tribute upon a grave, on the broken shaft of which was graven, "He bindeth the broken heart." June roses were now blooming over it, and a fair June moon shed its soft mellow rays upon it. "Twenty years ago!" It was no human voice trilling that sweet sad air; no, only a mocking-bird, which swayed to and fro upon the pliant bough of the weeping willow that hung its long feathery-like branches o'er the broken column.

Why did the solitary mourner, who knelt at the grave, struggling with all his bitter grief, start and press his hands upon his throbbing brow?

"O Carrie, Carrie!" moaned the stricken man. "Twenty years ago you were at my side, in the calm moonlight, pleading, angel that you were, with one unworthy your love. How boastingly I gave that pledge, sealing my own doom. 'If I should break this solemn vow, may I, my Carrie, lose your sweet love forever!' And I have lost it, and forever!"

The head with the gray hairs which sorrow and remorse had scattered so abundantly

amid the dark locks, sank upon the marble; and tears, such as only a strong man may weep, in agony, coursed down his pale cheeks.

"The worm that knows no dying is gnawing away my heart! *I* placed her in this untimely grave! I, who should have guarded and protected her through a long life, broke that tender loving heart, and laid the bright form low.

"How bright, how beautiful this life might have been, O God! *might* have been, but for me.

"A fair bride, a broken pledge, an intoxicated bridegroom, a broken heart and a folding of the fair cold hands over a breast from which the life-strokes had fled; a wanderer, maddened by grief and remorse, a lapse of twenty years, and the wanderer kneels beside the *broken shaft*—how emblematical of a *broken life*—and cries, 'My God! but for me, *it might have been!*'

"A bright, *bright* home; a vine-wreathed porch, beneath the shade of which might rest the loved and lost; children's feet might wander over the door-sill and climb on the father's knee; loving arms might twine about the neck of both father and mother; sweet musical voices might murmur words of love. But no; the picture fades, for I looked upon the wine when it was red, when it gave its color in the cup, when it moved itself aright; and at the last it bit like a serpent and stung like an adder."

The mocking-bird hushed its gush of melody; for sounds of mourning struck strange-

ly upon its joyous heart. The moon veiled herself in a light fleecy cloud, weeping with the grief-stricken one. The white rosebush rustled faintly in the sweet night breeze, offering a wealth of snowy buds and delicate fragrance to the wanderer.

The silent hours went on apace; yet the bowed form remained, and now and then the pale brow would writhe with anguish, the trembling hands be clasped, and the cold lips murmur, "O God! it might have been!"

Is it ever thus? Do all hearts bear within them.

"Some hidden place,

Some secret chamber where a cold corpse lies?

The drapery of whose couch we dress anon,  
Each day, beneath the pale glare of its eyes;  
We go from its still presence to the sun,  
To seek the pathways where it once was seen,

And strive to still the throbbing of our hearts  
With this wild cry 'O God! it might have been!'

"Where'er we go, in sunlight or in shade,  
We mourn some jewel which the heart has missed,

Some brow we touched, in days long since gone by.

Some lips whose freshness and first dew we kissed;

We shut out from our eyes the happy light  
Of sunbeams dancing on the hillside green,  
And like the wanderer, ope them to the night,  
And cry, like him, 'O God! it might have been!'"

## JACK S'MALLEY.

BY N. P. DARLING.

SWEET Jennie Brobdinagerous! What a stunning creature she was and is! How I loved her and how Jack loved her (Jack Smalley, I mean), but there was no chance for Jack, and I told him so. Yes, I told him so, because you see I liked Jack, and I didn't want him to break his heart for a woman whom I knew could never reciprocate his love.

"Jack," said I, "you're too small altogether. I'd banish her image from my heart at once, if I were in your place, if only for the looks of the thing."

"That's just what I've been thinking of doing," sighed Jack. "As you say, I'm too small, or Miss Brobdinagerous is too large, and we're a horrid-looking couple."

"Egad! you are that. I remember it particularly the other evening when you took her to the theatre. Why, Jack, the top of your hat only came up to her shoulder."

"I know it," cried Jack. "And she noticed it too. 'How small you are,' said she. 'And what a whopper you are,' said I. She didn't like that. I never did see a woman that liked to be called a whopper."

"No, of course not. It isn't elegant."

"And I don't like to be called small."

"Then you must pay your addresses to a little woman."

"And leave the whoppers to you, Jerri-smyth?"

"Yes, the Junos, rather, Miss Brobdinagerous in particular. You know she loves me?"

"I never doubted it?"

"And you perceive that there can't be the slightest chance for you in that quarter?"

"Of course not. That noble form of yours would carry the day with any woman," cried Jack.

"I believe you, my boy," said I; and between you and me, my lovely reader, I had reason to, for it's a well-known fact among my friends, that there isn't an unmarried

woman between Bangor and New York, that would not willingly part with her teeth and toe nails for just one smile of love from my lambent eyes.

I don't want to boast, and I don't want you to think that I'm egotistical, but upon my honor, madam, I believe I'm the handsomest piece of animated clay in New England. Such a form (I'm six feet four, from tip to tip) and such a face, it is really a pleasure to look at. All the ladies say so, and consequently all the gentlemen hate me—all save Jack Smalley, he's very fond of me because I'm so modest and unassuming.

Jack and I have been friends for the last five years. We are travelling agents for the firm of Midget & Fudge, and when we are at home we stop at the same house and occupy the same room, and at length we fell in love with the same woman, the stunning Miss Jennie Brobdinagerous, our landlady's only daughter.

We were not often at home at the same time, and so each in the absence of the other was attentive to Miss Brobdinagerous. But I knew that that magnificent creature loved me and me alone, though she tolerated Jack's attentions in my absence.

Miss Brobdinagerous was a blonde, white as a lily was she, with the exception of a pair of rather pale roses in her cheeks, and a mouth like a square yard of red flannel. Her eyes were of the deepest blue, with lashes of the darkest hue (she colored them), and about the length of an ordinary whiplash. Miss Brobdinagerous measured just six feet in her silk stockings, and weighed one hundred and seventy pounds when her appetite was good. It is needless to reiterate the remark that I loved her.

Jack Smalley, as I have before remarked, was a very small man, and he looked very insignificant beside the magnificent Miss Brobdinagerous. He was a pretty little

fellow, though—a “sweet pretty” little man, with a face as fair and smooth as a girl’s, and if he *had* been a girl, I’m sure I should have fallen in love with him. As it was, I only felt a sort of brotherly interest in him, and for his own sake warned him not to lavish his young affections upon the stately Miss Brobdinagerous.

The conversation between Jack and myself, which you have already read, took place about a fortnight ago. That afternoon Jack left town. I remained behind for another day, and in the evening, cast my heart at the feet of the lovely Jennie.

We were in the private parlor of Mamma Brobdinagerous and alone. It’s a small room, Jennie was seated on a sofa in one corner, with her gigantic but beautifully moulded great toe nestling in the opposite corner of the apartment, while I was doubled up in the middle of the room, on both my knees, pouring forth my love.

“And you love me better than any other woman in the world,” said Jennie, turning her deep blue eyes upon my intellectual countenance.

“Yes, darling.”

“And will you always love me as bad as that?”

“Till death,” said I.

A shiver ran through her frame. Owing to the length of the aforesaid frame, it took the shiver some time to run through, but at last wiggled in her beautifully moulded toe and passed off.

“Come to my arms,” cried she.

I went.

We embraced.

How the small bones cracked.

“You are so beautiful,” said she, pressing a kiss upon my ruby lips, “that a woman can’t help loving you.”

“I know it, my darling,” I sighed.

“And that’s what’s the matter. I can’t trust you. O Hiram! I want you all to myself. I don’t want any other woman to love you; but they will, Hiram, they will,” cried she, bursting into tears, and hugging me till my bones cracked again.

“But if I don’t love them why need you care?” I asked, as soon as I could recover breath enough to speak.

“But you will, Hiram, you are so susceptible.”

“If I do may I be shot,” cried I. “I’ll never look at another woman again so long as my name is Hiram Jerrismyth, if you’ll only say that you will be mine.”

She smiled sweetly through her tears.

“Hiram, I am going to try you. You are going away to-morrow, to be gone about a fortnight. I shall trust you entirely. If when you return you can say that you have thought of no woman but me, I will promise to be thine.”

“Why, dearest, I have thought of no woman but thee for the last two years,” I cried.

“And yet it was only last evening, that I found you kissing the pretty widow Ball behind the dining-room door.”

This was alas! too true; but then, it was all the widow’s fault. She couldn’t help it, poor thing. I pitied her, but I could not blame her.

“Have you forgotten the widow?” asked Jennie.

“Yes; in my happiness I have forgotten the existence of every woman save my beloved. As your accepted lover, basking in the light of your superior beauty, these merely pretty faces will pass by me unheeded. Your image, darling, is photographed upon my heart, and it is always before my mental vision. Then how can I stoop to admire anything less magnificently beautiful?”

“I will let you answer your own question when next we meet. Take this ring and wear it in remembrance of me,” said she, drawing a hoop of gold from her taper finger and slipping it upon mine.

In return I gave her a betrothal ring that I had purchased that morning.

One more sweet kiss, one more bone-cracking embrace, and then we parted.

I travelled for Midget & Fudge for the next ten days. Three nights ago I took the express train at Springfield for Boston and my Jennie. The train leaves the first mentioned city at about ten minutes past eight o’clock in the evening. The cars were quite full, but I succeeded in getting a whole seat to myself. The last bell rang, and just then a young lady entered the cars. There was just room for one more in the car, and that was in the vacant seat beside me. She saw it and came forward.

“Is this place engaged?”

What a sweet voice! and what eyes! and what lovely lips! and then she had the most stunning chignon you ever saw. Either that, or her eyes, or her voice, or all of them together melted me at once, and I couldn’t resist. I not only made room for

her beside me, but I wrapped my shawl around her to keep out the cold—around her feet, remember, those fairy-like feet; and I caught just a glimpse of a pair of the—by the way, I think I won't mention her ankles.

Her style of beauty was altogether different from Jennie's. She was a brunette, with the blackest and most roguish eyes, and short dark hair, that clustered in minute curls all over her head. And she knew she was pretty, as what pretty woman does not? and she didn't rest content until she felt pretty sure that I had made the same discovery also, and then she had such a way of playing her glances upon me that before we reached Palmer the marrow in my bones was reduced to a liquid form, and I had forgotten all about Miss Brobdinagerous, and—and alas! must I confess it? her head was resting on my breast, and the end of my mustache was tickling her lovely nose.

It was all over with me then. There's no use in struggling against fate, and I told her so.

"What shall I call you, sweet one?" I asked.

"Fanny Brytize."

"And you are going to Boston?"

"Yes."

"Then I shall see you again?"

"Yes."

The cars passed under a bridge just then, and I kissed her. She boxed my ears, but didn't seem greatly offended, and when we reached Worcester she was fast asleep with her head resting upon my shoulder.

Notwithstanding my blissful feelings, I fell asleep soon after myself, and never awoke until the cars reached Boston. But when I opened my eyes Fanny Brytize was gone. I was wide awake in a moment, and seizing my shawl and carpet-bag I rushed out of the cars in search of her, but alas! she was not to be found.

It was nearly midnight then, and so, instead of going to my boarding-place, I crossed the street to the United States Hotel, booked my name, was shown to my room, where in a short time, in spite of the remembrance of Fanny's glances, I fell asleep and dreamed that I was a Mormon and had just married Jennie and Fanny, and while one was kissing me upon one cheek the other dittoed on the opposite side.

Upon opening my eyes next morning, what was my horror to discover that my

ring, the one Jennie had given me, was gone. I had never experienced such a shock to my nervous system before. It was too horrible to think of. I could come to but one conclusion, which was that a female pickpocket of rare beauty had pillowed her wicked head upon my bosom for full two hours the previous evening, and had robbed me of my ring and— I sprang out of bed and seized my clothes. More mysterious still, my pocketbook was safe. Why had she not taken that? O, why had she not taken that instead of my ring?

It is my private opinion that I was upon the verge of insanity for the next few minutes, but by a violent effort I calmed myself, and went down to breakfast. Hurrying to the house of Mrs. Brobdinagerous, I found Jennie in the private parlor alone.

"O Hi!"—"O Jennie!"

We fell into each other's arms. The small bones cracked (my ribs are sore yet), and then letting me go she looked up into my eyes.

"Have you been true, Hiram?"

I thought of George Hatchet and his little Washington and I couldn't tell a lie—I could not speak. I blushed painfully, and her eyes fell upon my bare fingers.

"My ring! My ring?"

"I—I—I've lost it," I stammered.

The door opened and my acquaintance of the previous evening stood before us.

"Here is your ring," said Miss Fanny Brytize.

I wanted to faint, but my time had not yet come.

"Do you know this woman?" I gasped.

"Why, yes, Hiram, don't you?" (She threw off her glossy black wig.) "It is our mutual friend Jack Smalley, in female attire."

"Good heavens! and I was kissing the rascal all last evening?" I yelled.

"Yes," said Miss Brobdinagerous, "but please don't do so any more, as I'm going to marry him to-morrow and I want my husband all to myself."

I fainted then. When I returned to consciousness, Jack was leaning over me.

"I know I'm small," said he.

"Yes, but you're mighty. Good-by, my boy. I should like to attend your wedding, but the sight would be too much for me. I can never behold her another's."

They are married ere this, and I am broken-hearted.

## JANETTE'S HATRED.

BY MATTIE WINFIELD TORREY.

I AM compelled to introduce my heroine in dishabille. I am aware that it isn't the proper thing to do, but who can control circumstances? Try it yourself, and see how often they get the upper hand of you. I am aware that the illustrious Corsican pretended to be entirely beyond the folly of yielding one iota to anything so utterly insignificant as a "circumstance;" but you and I, my friend, are not Napoleons!

Miss Janette Stanley, therefore, was not attired according to the latest imported foreign fashion. She had an odious green veil twisted about her head; she had her skirts pinned up, showing a bright balmoral and the daintiest of slippers; in her hand she held a broom and duster, wherewith she proceeded to sweep and dust the parlor which no iconoclastic Bridget was ever allowed to invade. Aunt Grace would have gone distracted at the thought of servants' hands touching her costly Parian and Sevres. It was only after long years of practice, under her own eye, that her niece was allowed to remove and dust the numerous articles of *vertu* with which the rooms were filled.

Janette was a blithe little body and as she worked she sang, while her thoughts ran something after this fashion:

"So Mr. Thorpe Deane comes to-day. 'Aunt Grace's paragon of perfection will make his appearance by the afternoon train, provided

his serene highness condescends to journey in anything as plebeian as a railcar. Let me see; he comes from India, direct. I shouldn't wonder to see him arrive in a palanquin with rose-colored curtains. How I shall hate him! I never do like people who are held up as patterns of wisdom and models of elegance, and I can't recall the time when Aunt Grace hasn't sounded her favorite nephew's praises. I expect he is a perfect Sybarite, and destined to give her no end of trouble, which is some consolation! I have this advantage—being small and insignificant, I shall pass unnoticed. He will never think of looking twice at such an undignified little piece of femininity. He should see me once in this costume! Wouldn't I make an impression? O, decidedly! And such an impression as would throw his lordship into convulsions!" And Janette stopped to flourish her duster and pirouette in front of one of the long mirrors, thinking how much more sensible it would have been of Mr. Thorpe to have remained at home, instead of flying off to foreign countries, picking up French phrases and getting transformed from a sensible American into a miserable pretension and aping of titled aristocracy. Thinking all this and humming softly to herself, Janette's labors progressed toward completion, when she was startled by the ringing of the doorbell.

"The butcher, the baker, or the candle-

stick maker," quoted she, moving toward the door; "I wonder which? Would it be asking too much to expect them to learn to patronize the area entrance? It's too bad to call Bridget from her work," with which benevolent reflection she proceeded to open the door herself.

The butcher, the baker, the candle-stick maker, indeed! Why! the man standing there could be no other than the paragon himself. Janette knew him the moment her eyes rested upon the tall figure. She had no need to look at the bronzed and bearded face, or to listen to the musical voice in which inquiry was made respecting Aunt Grace.

Here was a *contretemps* for a young lady of delicate nerves and refined susceptibilities!

You will not wonder when I tell you that Janette was hardly equal to the occasion, but managed to recover sufficient animation to show the gentleman into the parlor, after which she rushed off like a young hurricane, to inform Aunt Grace of the arrival.

"He's come! He's come!"

"What!" shrieked Aunt Grace; "you don't mean—?"

"Indeed, I do! It's your paragon; and he's down stairs this blessed minute, making the acquaintance of my broom and duster!"

"You don't say you allowed yourself to be caught in that plight? Any one looking so like a fright! Now help me on with this chignon, and pull those curls a little more to the left. Do you think pink or blue most becoming to me? Dear boy! I must not keep him waiting." And Aunt Grace descended in a flutter of anxiety, to clasp to her bosom the nephew of whom she was so proud.

As for Janette, she untwisted the veil and let the brown curls ripple all over her shoulders, and sat down to collect her scattered wits.

"What a fool I am!" she thought. "He doubtless took me for a servant, and will never think of confounding me with the slipshod young person who admitted him upon his arrival. How tall he is, and with what an air of superiority he looked down upon me. Bah! I hate superior people," with which sage reflection she rang for her maid, and the two proceeded to get up a ravishing toilet, of course, without so much as a thought with reference to its effects on the hated paragon.

"I suppose you two are not really cousins," said Aunt Grace, upon introducing them, "seeing that Janette is the child of my half-brother, while you, Thorpe, are my own sister's son; but I want you to feel as if you

were related, and, more than that, I hope you will be good friends."

"Neither of which would be at all difficult," the paragon assured her, bowing low over the little hand which Janette held out with some amusing thoughts as to its previous acquaintance with broom and duster.

The gentleman seemed to have no haunting recollections of an unpleasant nature with respect to any previous meeting, but on the contrary, appeared quite willing to entertain his new-found cousin.

"How well he talks," reflected Janette. "If he only wouldn't put on that high and mighty air, one could feel at ease with him. But in order to be a paragon, I suppose it is necessary to be dignified and unapproachable. I'm glad I'm not a paragon. Ugh! I hate paragons."

Yes, Janette hated paragons, and she found herself compelled to declare and reiterate it forty times a day. Every time Thorpe Deane was particularly fascinating in his superior and inimitable way, Janette gave herself a vigorous pinch, and proceeded, *sotto voce*, to reaffirm her hatred of paragons. I assure you, it came to pass before long, that the poor child's arms were black and blue from repeated applications of her own small thumb and finger.

Of course, Aunt Grace being a woman, had eyes in her head, and pretty sharp ones they were, too, so that Janette's self-inflicted punishments did not escape her. Perhaps she had a plan in what followed, but that is neither here nor there.

"Thorpe," said she, suddenly, one morning, "what are you going to do with that place of yours down on the lake shore?—Brentwood, it used to be called, I think."

"O, that," said Thorpe, "I really don't know. It must be nearly in ruins by this time. I haven't seen it in an age."

"No! I suspected as much. I hope your travels have not made you forgetful of your childhood's home. It used to be a fine place in your father's day. By the way, the Westervelts own the next place. You haven't forgotten your old playmate, Lucile? She is pronounced the most elegant girl in our set. You remember her, Janette, at Mrs. Forrester's reception; the stylish girl in maize-colored silk? Now I propose that we drive down, renew your acquaintance with the Westervelts, and go over and explore the old place."

The proposal met with unanimous approval, and the carriage was ordered out. I should

be deceiving you if I concealed the fact that Janette's arms received more than one additional pinch during that brisk drive, for the paragon exerted himself, and Aunt Grace seemed to know upon what topic to start him, in order to have him show off to perfection.

But the Westervelt mansion, and the Westervelt parlors in all their splendor of crimson and gilt, and, more especially, Miss Lucile Westervelt, with her really elegant and superior manners, her finished French toilet, whereof every elaborate frill, and flounce, and fold, were irreproachably correct and proper. All this combination of perfections struck such a chill to the heart of poor little Janette, that she actually hadn't sufficient ambition to pinch herself into a decorous frame of mind.

Miss Lucile was studiously polite to the whole party, but her expressions of gratification upon the renewal of the acquaintance with her old playmate, were most flattering to that gentleman. Whatever he thought of the matter, he was imperturbably gracious and calm.

"Two paragons!" sighed Janette. "I shall be quite annihilated. I feel already as if I were blotted out of existence. I think I see why Aunt Grace was so solicitous as to the present state and condition of Brentwood. I never knew her to try her hand at match-making before, but she couldn't have done better had she practised for a lifetime. The two places ought to be united, and two such paragons deserve no happier destiny than to be made one for life. I do hate a paragon!"

"Janette, give me your arm," commanded Aunt Grace, as the party, with the addition of Miss Westervelt, entered the neglected Brentwood grounds; "and Thorpe, help Miss Lucile through the thicket. It's a shame to see a fine property going to ruin in this way. You ought to be ashamed of it, sir!"

After wandering about the weed-grown shrubberies and losing their way two or three times, they finally reached the house, a substantial brick edifice, with many columned piazzas from which the lake was visible, and here they sat down to rest.

"We must come down here this summer and put things in order," decided Aunt Grace. "I shall never rest until the old place looks something as it did when you were a boy."

"I shall be only too happy to have you take me in hand," said Thorpe. "Would you advise me to set up a bachelor's hall for the purpose of exorcising the ghosts, which have for

so long been the sole proprietors of Brentwood?"

But Aunt Grace was giving Miss Westervelt a detailed account of the improvements she should feel called upon to suggest, and Janette had stolen away sometime before, so Thorpe rambled off by himself and left the two ladies to plan and devise for his benefit.

Janette was making a little tour of investigation around the house, when she noticed a door which seemed slightly ajar, and, pushing against it, she found herself in a short passage. A door on the right yielded to her touch, and she stood within what had once been the library, for there were bookcases and shelves from floor to ceiling. The light was dim, but she could make out the fine proportions of the room, and the now tarnished decorations which had once made it such a charming spot. Then she thought of it restored to all its former splendor, and of Thorpe Deane as its master, and beside him, mistress of his heart and home, Miss Lucile—and here she paused to give herself an extra sharp pinch.

"I'm a great fool," she whispered to herself. "I believe I've lost every particle of sense I ever possessed. Of course, he'll marry her, and it's right and proper he should. I'll try not to think of it any more. O Thorpe, Thorpe, you never shall guess my secret!"

"Janette! my little winsome darling!" and she found herself imprisoned in a pair of strong arms. "Forgive me for frightening you. I followed you in here on purpose to tell you how dear you were to me, and I could not avoid overhearing your words. I feared you had, in some way, learned to hate me, and was prepared to plead my cause with all the eloquence I could command. Can it be possible, that such a dainty rosebud of a woman can love a rough old fellow like me? My darling, will you be my wife? and shall Brentwood be our future home?"

The answer was lost in a shower of kisses.

A few moments of such delicious transports as only true lovers know, and the voice of Aunt Grace was heard.

"Ah! we have found you at last."

"And I have found my promised bride. Congratulate me, if you please."

"The very thing I wished for!" cried Aunt Grace with enthusiasm. "Now we can go to work to some purpose."

And they did; and to-day Brentwood is the prettiest place in the country, and its master and mistress the happiest pair of married lovers you ever met.



## JILTED.

BY PRESLEY W. MORRIS.

## I.

I HAD just received a letter from my cousin Richard Houston, and having broken the seal, had glanced at the signature, when there was an unceremonious entrance into my bachelor apartments.

"Halloo, Burleigh?" I exclaimed; "how are you? Take a seat."

He was my friend, was Frank Burleigh. Our friendship had not been of very long duration as yet, however. I had seen him for the first time the previous winter. At the time of which I write it was only May.

"I say, Traynor," Frank said, when he had seated himself, "what do you say to a trip to the country next week?"

"A trip to the country?" I answered.

"I'd rather go to Newport."

"I wouldn't. I'm going out next week to where I spent a month last summer. I had a splendid time then, and I will again. I can hunt and fish, and find every pleasure that I want. My sister will go, and a cousin, Virginia Eglinton, who is coming to our house to-morrow, will accompany us."

"And you want me to go, too?" I asked.

"Yes. Will you?"

"Perhaps. But wait till I read my letter, the seal of which I was just breaking when you entered."

"Proceed," Frank said.

I read the letter. It was as follows

"MY DEAR WALTER,—I haven't seen you for so long that I have almost forgotten how you look. I should be delighted to look upon your handsome countenance once more. Can you come out and stay with us a few weeks? We will all be positively delighted if you can. If you desire, you may bring half a dozen of your friends along with you. I expect to have a dozen or so of my own here for a while; you know Belle and I are fond of company. Be sure to come. Your cousin,

"RICHARD HOUSTON."

"Listen to this," I said to Frank, when I had finished. And I read it to him.

"Well, it's evident that if you go there," he said, "you can't go with us."

"Frank, I have an idea," I exclaimed.

"Well, what is it?"

"Have you any particular reasons for going to the place you mention?"

"None, save that I had a pleasant time there last summer, enjoying myself very much."

"Then suppose that, instead of my accompanying you, you go with me out to my cousin Richard Houston's?"

"But there are three of us," Frank objected.

"You heard what he said about my bringing half a dozen along with me," I returned. "Dick means exactly what he states about that. He is a prince of good fellows, and will be delighted to have you. He and his wife are not happy unless they have, at least, half a score of guests around them in the summer. As for the pleasures you mention, I am sure you can enjoy yourself as well at Dick's in that respect, as you can anywhere under the sun."

"Your argument overcomes all of my objections," Frank exclaimed. "I am perfectly willing to go with you. It only remains to get the consent of the girls. However, my sister Alice will not object, so we go to some pleasant place in the country; and Cousin Virginia need not know that we have made any change in our intended destination at all, as she has never either heard of the place where I was last summer, or your Cousin Richard's. All that she desires is a few weeks of rural pleasures; so I will take the responsibility and say that we will all become Mr. Richard Houston's guests—well, when?"

"Suppose I write to him that we will all be out a week from to-day?" I said.

"That will suit me," Frank replied.

And so the matter was arranged. That evening I sent the following letter to Richard:

"DEAR DICK,—I will be out a week from date. Will bring a few friends along with me; a couple of ladies and a gentleman. My respects to Dela and your wife.

"Yours as ever,

"WALTER TRAYNOR."

A week later all four of us were whirling along on the train towards our destination. Richard resided about a hundred miles from the place where Frank and I resided. In due time we got off the train. The first thing I heard was:

"Halloo, old boy! Glad to see you?" And my cousin Richard had me by the hand.

I introduced him to my companions. Very shortly we were seated in Dick's carriage. There was a drive of two miles before us ere we would reach his house.

"You are the first arrivals," Dick said, as we drove along. "Belle and I concluded that we'd have the house full this summer, but they haven't come yet."

The drive of two miles was soon over. Dick hurried us into the parlors, where we found his wife waiting to welcome us.

But I missed some one. I wondered where Dela Houston was. She was Dick's sister, and, therefore, my cousin. I may as well state that the cousinship existed only in about the third degree.

"Where's Dela?" I inquired.

"She's not far away," Richard answered. "She will be in very shortly, I don't doubt."

"I saw her not ten minutes before you came," Belle, Dick's wife, said.

"I will go and hunt her up," I said. "I dare say I can find my little cousin."

"Go on," said Belle; "you shall be shown to your room when you return. I presume that the same will be agreeable to all of you, as you are no doubt fatigued."

"And heated and dusty," Frank Burleigh put in.

I left them. Going down the hall, I wondered if I should not find Dela in the library. I had spent many hours in there with her—pleasant hours they had been. Perhaps I might add that there had been something of sweetness to me in them. Reaching the library door, I opened it and looked in. Yes, Dela was there.

Sweet Dela! She was standing in an attitude of expectancy, looking towards the door, and made a delightful picture. She was slender and graceful in figure. There was an added touch of crimson in her cheeks; her scarlet lips, just parted, showed the pearl-white teeth within.

"Dela!" I said.

"Walter?" she answered.

I took both her hands in mine. Some very sweet sensations were within my

breast. She did not release herself. I drew her a step closer to me.

"Dela, sweet Dela?" I whispered.

"O Walter!" she murmured.

There had been some lover-like scenes between her and me before, but none to quite equal this. My blood was in a strange tumult.

"Dela, Dela, I love you!" I said.

By some means or other her head fell on my shoulder.

"Tell me that you love me, my sweet!" I said to her.

"I love you," she murmured.

"And will you be my wife?"

There was a moment of silence.

"Answer me," I said. "Dela, will you?"

"Yes, I will," I heard her murmur.

It was singular that at that moment another face floated between me and the sweet one on my shoulder, and that a throb of pain touched my heart. Singular, but true! And the face was that of Virginia Eglinton, Frank Burleigh's cousin, a girl whom I had known for but a brief space.

And so Dela Houston and I became engaged.

## II.

Dick's guests soon arrived, and there was a great deal of gayety about his place. The long days of the summer were one continual round of amusement.

I was thrown in contact with Virginia Eglinton fully as much as I was with Dela. I remember now my first meeting with the girl, and the strange exquisite thrill that ran through my being. Even then I decided that there were very few women who could claim to be her equals. There was something regal about her. Her carriage and the poise of her head were queenly. She seemed born to receive homage, and yet there was nothing haughty or cold about her. She seemed to be unconscious of her beauty and her powers; and she was none the less charming on account of this unconsciousness. There was some wonderful attraction for me about her; yes, for me, the betrothed husband of another. As the days went on we became quite friendly—at least, I called the relation between us that of friendship. I did not pause to ask myself whither it might lead me. I did not know that I was placing myself on

grounds that threatened danger to what was between me and my sweet little blossom, Dela Houston.

A month passed away. Perhaps my treatment of Dela lacked the full warmth that it should have had under the circumstances. I dare say that any person knowing we were lovers would have called us a very cold pair. However, if I was somewhat cold, Dela did not seem to take it to heart. Probably she had no definite idea of how I ought to treat her, and, therefore, saw nothing wrong in my course.

Sometimes I thought of what a difference there must be between her and Virginia Eglinton in that respect. Ah! the man that loved this queenly woman would not be allowed to stand aloof in cold admiration. He must give her all of a strong passionate love, or he could not make her happy.

Something singular was happening to Frank Burleigh during these passing days. When he had first become acquainted with Dela, he fairly raved to me about her sweetness and innocence. I had laughed at him, and had not informed him of the relation in which we stood to each other. Indeed, Dela and I had agreed to keep the matter a secret between ourselves for the present. Shortly he ceased to speak of her to me. He became soberer, not like the merry Frank of old. At times, however, he would banish his seriousness, and become as gay and frank as ever.

I did not like the symptoms. I began to watch him when he was in the presence of Dela. I soon noticed that then his spirits were highest; in her company he seemed to be entirely happy. My conclusion was inevitable; he loved her. I first repeated those words with a great feeling of pity for him in my heart.

Strange enough, no thought of jealousy on his account came to me. The possibility of his winning Dela away from me did not occur to me. And yet he was handsome, and talented, and rich. Why shouldn't some such possibility have suggested itself? If some men had stood in my place, the mere fact of his loving her would have fired them with jealousy, and they would have watched his every action.

We had been at Dick's a week over a month when he came to me and made a confession of it all.

"Walter," he said, "something of very

great importance has occurred to me since I came here."

I knew in a moment what was coming, but did not choose to betray my knowledge.

"I'm listening," I said, quietly.

"I have learned to love," Frank continued.

"And—"

"It is your cousin Dela Houston that I love. O Walter, I love her passionately, madly!"

I half turned away. A strong pain was surging in my bosom for this man. To love in vain—O, what bitter words!

"Walter, do you think there is any hope for me?" he questioned, eagerly.

What could I say? For a moment the fact of Dela's being my betrothed wife trembled on my lips; but I did not speak. It seemed to me that it could not lessen his pain to hear such a thing from my lips. I knew that it would be best for him to learn his fate from Dela herself. It would satisfy him better, and make him more contented, for her to tell him that she did not love him. So I gave him an evasive answer.

Nothing more of importance was said upon the subject between us. But what he had said gave me food for thought. A day passed, and the subject was with me continually. At first only pity found a place in my heart. There was no feeling of triumph that the woman he loved was mine. Then it occurred to me that it was singular pity was a stronger emotion than love. Then, for the first time, I asked myself a question that was worthy of thought:

"Do I really love Dela Houston?"

The question gave me a great deal of trouble. I was not yet ready to answer. I had told her that I loved her. More than that, when I said so, I had firmly believed it. The question haunted me. I could not banish it. In vain I told myself that I would be true—that it was mere folly for such a thing to occur to me. I told myself that I certainly could not be so fickle as to vow my love one month, and doubt its truth the next, and in telling myself that, I thought I had answered my question. But it only came back to me, abiding in my thoughts more persistently.

I found an answer at last. One afternoon I was seated in the conservatory, holding a book of poems idly in my hand, when Virginia Eglinton came in.

"So you are alone?" she said.

"Yes," I responded, as I gave her a seat beside me on the bench that I occupied.

"What are you reading?" she asked.

"Poetry," I said, handing her the volume; "not lyrics of battles, but smoothly flowing rhymes of love, and friendship, and so on."

"Do you know that there are some things I do not believe in much?" she said.

"Indeed," I laughed. "Love, for instance."

She had been holding a red rose in her hand; now she was picking it to pieces.

"I was not referring to that," she answered.

"Do you believe in love?" I persisted.

The rose was nearly in pieces, its petals scattered over her lap. She was silent.

"Answer me!" I cried.

The air was heavy with mingled perfumes. I felt a delicious intoxication of sweetness taking possession of me. Virginia Eglinton raised her eyes to mine. Their light was clear and candid.

"Since you insist on an answer," she said, "I can give you one: I do believe in love."

There was nothing in her manner, but at that moment her hand touched mine. In that instant I read my own heart clearly. I did not love Dela Houston, but instead I loved the queenly woman before me. I loved her, I realized, not with the weak regard I had felt for my tender-eyed little cousin, but with a strong absorbing passion, worthy to be dignified by the name. But I did not speak then.

### III.

WHAT should I do? I was engaged to one woman, and loved another. Calmly looking the matter in the face, what course was open for me? Surely that was a hard question to answer. I felt bitterly toward myself. Was not two persons' happiness destroyed, or to be destroyed by me? Frank Burleigh loved Dela Houston, and Dela—

I could not bear to pursue that latter thought. O, that the girl had never loved me, and that when I had been so blind, I had been brought to my sight by her!

Sometimes I would decide that I would keep my love for Virginia Eglinton a secret in my bosom, and marry Dela without a

word. By winning her love I had blighted Frank's hopes; it was too much that I should now cast that love from me.

But then I would waver in that resolve. An unloved wife! Ah! if Dela knew the truth, no doubt she would release me and be thankful that she had learned it. Then I would be free to tell Virginia Eglinton that I loved her—be free to win her if I could.

Well, whatever my resolves were, I *did* tell her that I loved her. I can scarcely tell how it occurred, only that my love carried me away and I spoke. And she? I had only told her that I loved her, and before I had time to ask her if she loved me, I saw where I stood. Then I told her all, and that Dela was my promised wife.

"What shall I do?" I cried, in conclusion.

"Marry her, as you have promised," Virginia Eglinton said, coldly. "I have no desire to come between any man and his vows."

Then she burst into tears and rushed away from me. Tears for me! My heart thrilled. Could it be possible that she loved me?

After that I made my decision. Right or wrong, I would break my engagement with Dela Houston. I decided to tell her all.

But it was easier to resolve than to do. Sweet Dela! she had trusted me, and I was about to do that which might break her heart. And here latterly I thought she must have obtained a suspicion of the truth. The roses had fled from her cheeks, her step was becoming slow and languid, her manner had lost its cheerfulness; and I had been so cold lately that perhaps her suspicions had deepened into certainty.

Dick's guests fled, all but the four of us who had come together. At last I concluded that it was folly to wait for circumstances or opportunity. I knew that I had lacked opportunity more particularly on account of my cowardice than anything else. If I would try, I could make my opportunity. Delay could not aid me.

So I had a private interview with Dela. There was nothing of the manner of the lover about me. I had forgotten *that* for so long that I suppose she did not expect it.

"Dela," I said, abruptly, "I am about to approach a very delicate subject."

A startled expression came into her eyes. She *had read me then*, and understood to what I was approaching.

"You remember the scene that occurred the first day I came?" I continued.

"I certainly could not forget it," she said.

There was a silence of some time. I could not bear to look in the face of the girl.

"Dela!" I said, presently.

"Walter!" she answered.

Lifting my eyes to her face for the first time in many minutes, I was surprised to see that she was weeping softly. Evidently she understood it all, and anticipated what I should say.

"It appears to me that a great mistake was made in that day," I added.

I was more surprised than ever. Her sobs became violent now.

"O Walter," she cried, between them, "do not upbraid me, please do not! I thought I loved you, but since I beheld him, I have discovered what love is. And he loves me, too, for he told me so. Walter, forgive me for telling you the truth, but I can never marry you. I love him too well for that. It would be utterly wrong for me to do so."

I had been sitting down, but now I sprang to my feet in astonishment.

"And whom do you mean by him?" I exclaimed.

"Why, don't you know?" she answered.

"Of course you do; it's Frank Burleigh."

I do not know whether my emotions depicted themselves on my countenance or not. I do know, however, that being jilted had the opposite to the usual effect upon me. I was the happiest man imaginable. Presently I burst out laughing.

"Dela," I cried, "we have both been very blind and foolish for the last few weeks. Why, I was going to tell you that I do not love you, and I feared it would break your heart."

Dela had dried her tears.

"And I feared my telling you *that* would break *yours*," she said.

Leaving her I sought Virginia Eglinton. I felt that I could not bear suspense, but must know my fate as soon as possible. I found her, as it chanced, where my love had first made itself known, in the conservatory.

"I am free, Miss Eglinton," I said, as I walked up to her.

She grew pale.

"And—"

She did not finish her sentence, but I completed it for her.

"Dela discarded me," I said. "It seems that we have both made a mistake. She does not love me."

I glanced into the eyes of the girl. During the silence that followed, I fancied that I could hear my heart beat. I bent low over the queenly head of her I loved.

"Does Miss Eglinton love me?" I whispered.

Lower and lower I bent till I felt her perfumed breath on my lips.

"Does she?" I asked again.

"She loves you with all her heart," were the words that I caught, murmured just above her breath.

In an instant my lips met hers in the first kiss of love.

I shall say nothing about the two weddings that occurred.

## JINKS, PHIPPS AND L

BY P. W. MORRIS.

### CHAPTER I

#### I GO TO THE COUNTRY.

"MR. WALTERS, you must go to the country."

Dr. Evershaw was speaking like a man who meant to be obeyed. Five minutes before, he had stepped into the office to have, as he said, a little chat with me. My pen had been hurrying over "legal cap" at a furious rate, but I gladly laid it down when he came in, for his cheery conversation was ever welcome, as a respite from business cares.

"But, Dr. Evershaw, I haven't time," I said.

The doctor brought his cane down on the office floor, with a thump.

"I repeat you *must* go, sir! Your physical system demands that you shall, or an alternative that is far worse will be yours. Mr. Walters, your business can go on without you; I am confident that it will *have* to go on without your help, for the present. You have symptoms that are not to be disregarded. Choose: cease voluntarily for a short time from business; breathe the pure air of the hills and valleys; or continue as you are, for, perhaps, a month, and then wake up some morning and find that you are chained to your bed; that disease is coursing fiery hot through your veins!"

The old doctor paused for a moment, and then proceeded to take my wrist between his fingers.

"Humph!" he muttered; "as I expected."

Then he began and described certain sensations that I had been experiencing lately. I was compelled to acknowledge the accuracy of all he said. The fact is, the doctor's words were beginning to have the desired effect upon me. I had acknowledged to myself before this, that I was a little uneasy about those symptoms that he spoke of; my sensations of weariness and languor did not mean nothing. I had asked myself if it was not best to cease from work for a little while.

"So, you will go, will you not?" Dr. Evershaw asked, as he finished.

At that moment Mr. Frysinger, senior member of our firm, walked in.

"Mr. Frysinger, can you spare me for a

couple of weeks, while I take a run out into the country?" I inquired.

"You'd better say for a couple of months," Dr. Evershaw growled. "Mr. Frysinger, you will spare him, or you will have him to nurse through a dangerous illness."

To be brief, the upshot of the matter was, that it was decided I should go.

A few words of explanation. A gilt-lettered sign outside can best tell the character of our firm:

**"FRYSINGER & WALTERS,  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW."**

I had read law with Mr. Frysinger, and had been his partner for a year at the time of which I am speaking. He was more than a score of years my senior in age. I had become his partner at the age of twenty-five, so that I was twenty-six, at the time of which I write.

The next morning found me on the train, whirling along at the rate of thirty miles an hour, bound for Acton, a country town situated a hundred miles from the city. I had had no difficulty, after I had once decided to go, as to whither it should be.

"I do not know of any place that I would as soon go to as my uncle John Walters's, I had said to myself. "And I haven't been to Acton for three years. I'll declare I must have gone there shortly, whether any necessity existed for it or not."

So to my Uncle John's I was going, pleasant memories of meadow, and orchard, and farmhouse running through my mind. And then the family, so cordial, so natural, so free from affectations! It would be a delight to be amongst them. I was as light-hearted as a boy going home from school to spend his vacation, for it had been demonstrated to me that the business of the firm of Frysinger & Walters need not suffer at all during my absence, so that the next month or two I would be free from every care.

I was lounging in the smoking-car with a cigar in my mouth, when I saw on a seat in front of me a valise. There was nothing peculiar about it, but on it was a card containing a man's name, and the word Acton. Of course it excited my interest. In travel-

ling, we always feel a sympathetic interest in those whose destination is the same as our own. I say I felt an interest in the valise, for the owner was not in the seat. Naturally enough, I fell to wondering what kind of a man he was, and if he was a resident of Acton, etc. I speculated as to whether he was long or short, light-complexioned or dark-complexioned, fat or lean, handsome or plain, intelligent or dull, well-dressed or—

A gentleman came from the other end of the car and took his seat by the valise. I looked out of the window, but stole a furtive glance at him occasionally. He was a slender, foppish-looking chap, and stylishly dressed. A diamond gleamed on his shirt front, and the light scintillated from another on his hand. If this was Mr. Lewis Phipps (that was the name on the valise), he was evidently a dandy of the first cut. I completed my survey of him, and then said:

"Are you going to Acton, sir?"

"Yes—sir," he drawled, in reply.

"Do you reside there?" I continued.

"No—sir," in the same tone.

This was not very encouraging to a man who wanted merely to be sociable. But I was not to be balked so easily.

"I am going there myself," I added, presently. "Nice portion of the country in that vicinity."

"Yes—sir," was all the response I received from Mr. Phipps.

I looked out of the window for a few moments, and then returned to the charge again.

"Are you acquainted with many people at Acton?"

"No—sir."

I bit off the end of my cigar a little unnecessarily. I had only asked the man a few common questions, more for the reason that he was going to Acton than anything else, and his replies had scarcely been civil. His manner was saying as plainly as words could, "Let me alone, sir."

I am sure that I am not the man to force myself on anybody's acquaintance when it is not desirable to them. But I would speak once more to this man. He was going to Acton. Perhaps something was wrong with him; it might be that he had—

"Have you the toothache, sir?" I asked, coolly.

"No sir," he snapped out shortly.

I let him alone after that, considering his case hopeless. Acton was reached at length,

and Mr. Phipps and I stepped off the train.

"Halloo, Tom!" shouted a hearty voice; "I am confoundedly glad to see you!"

The owner of the voice strode out from the little crowd that was clustered on the platform, and grasping my hand gave it a bear's grip. I recognized him immediately; it was my cousin Fred Walters.

"I rode down after the mail," he added, after our greeting was finished. "Was surprised to see you, but—pshaw! it aint necessary for me to say that I am rejoiced to see you once again; you know us all, Tom."

Then he insisted on my mounting his horse, which I did, and we were soon going along the pleasant road that led to my Uncle John's residence, which was situated about half a mile from the village.

I shall not dwell on my welcome. It was a hearty one, none the less so because my visit was unexpected. I was scolded, too, that I had staid away so long.

## CHAPTER II.

### H. JINES.

THE most interesting member of my uncle's family, to most young men, would have been Miss Minnie Ray. She was the niece of my uncle's wife, and therefore, there of course existed no blood relationship between her and myself. She was twenty, or thereabouts, with a slender figure and decidedly pretty face. I had never beheld her before my visit, for she had only become a member of the family a couple of years previously. I mentally decided that she was a very sweet little creature, the first moment that I beheld her.

Fred told me confidentially, that she was worth about a thousand dollars a year in her own right. That didn't appear to me to be any great matter, but to the simple country folks around, it seemed quite a fortune. I didn't expect to like Miss Minnie any the better for her thousand a year; not that I was disregarding of money matters, but because I did not consider money a component element of friendship. Perhaps the fact that I was in the possession of a sufficiency of that desirable article to allow me to pass through the world with ease, if I chose, may have had some effect upon me.

As a natural consequence, due partly, I presume, to her beauty, and partly to the thousand a year, Miss Minnie had plenty of

beaux. As to whether she cared for any of these, or was indifferent to all, it took me some time to find out.

Prominent among them, was one Mr. H. Jinks, otherwise Hiram Jinks. The first time that I beheld him I shall never forget. Fred and I had been out hunting, and were returning home. We were still some distance away, when we came to a large tree in a grassy field. I threw myself down beneath it, declaring that I was fatigued, and must rest a while. Fred seated himself beside me. It was quite a pretty scene. All nature was fresh in her garb of green; the grassy field spread away in front and behind us; to our left, almost hidden by leafy trees, was Uncle John's residence. Close on our right was a hill that was probably fifty yards from top to bottom. It was very steep, but like the rest of the field its side was covered with grass, and as smooth as though levelled by a roller.

I stretched myself out on the grass, and closing my eyes, listened to the drowsy stir of leaves, the music of the birds, the lowing of cattle, and the song of the laborer borne across the fields upon the balmy breeze.

I was about half asleep, when Fred said:

"I hear voices; some one is coming down the path."

I raised myself on my elbow, and the tones were audible to me. In a moment, Fred and I beheld the persons conversing. One was a great tall awkward-looking specimen of humanity, dressed in a tow linen suit, his coat reaching almost to his heels.

"I know that talk-chap," whispered Fred; "it is Mr. Jinks. He is, I suppose, going to our house; but let's keep out of sight, if possible, for I don't want to be bored by him any more than I can help, confound him! I do not know that little chap, who is dressed to kill."

But if I was not very much mistaken, I did. It was Mr. Lewis Phipps, the gentleman of the valise, he whom I had reason to suppose could only use monosyllabic words. I said nothing, however, for the two were just passing us.

They had proceeded but a few feet past us, not having seen us, when there was a halt, caused by Mr. Phipps's stopping and exclaiming:

"I say, Jinks, what is that rattling noise? is it a snake?"

Mr. Jinks placed himself in a listening attitude, and replied, directly:

"Darn me, Phipps, if I don't believe it is!

Yes, I'm sure it's a snake!" he added, a moment later.

"Let's run!" ejaculated Phipps.

"Darn me, if I run from a snake!" answered Mr. H. Jinks. "Here, Phipps, you get up on this little mound, and I'll hunt a club and kill it."

Fred whispered to me; "I'll venture to say there is a bumble-bee's nest buried in the grass on that mound. I know Mr. Jinks."

Meantime Mr. Phipps had taken his stand on the mound.

"Now just stand there," said Mr. Jinks, "and I'll attend to the snake."

He proceeded further away from us. Soon we heard a blow upon the earth, and he shouted, "I've killed him; halloo, Phipps, I say, Phipps, stay there! here's another one, twice as big! Don't move!"

That last injunction was unheeded, for Phipps gave an unearthly yell, and jumping three feet high, shrieked:

"It's got me! Ouch! O Jinks, help! Murder! There's one up my breeches leg!"

Jinks came pushing towards him, while he danced and capered like a madman.

"There, it has bit me four times!" he yelled. "O, I'm a dead man! I'm a goner!"

"Phipps, darn it, don't be frightened!" cried Jinks. "It's not a snake; you've only stirred up a bumble-bee's nest."

At that instant something bit with tremendous force, at least he thought so, just above Mr. Phipps's eye.

"O my eye!" he roared.

"Run, Phipps, run, or they'll eat you up!" shouted Jinks.

And Phipps did run; around and around he went, throwing his arms wildly about his head. The scene was so very ludicrous, that Fred and I could do nothing but lay there, nearly bursting with laughter.

As for Jinks, he fairly shouted. There seemed to be no bounds to his mirth, and throwing himself on the earth he rolled over and over. But he had not reckoned on what followed; for the matter of that, neither had we. Mr. Jinks rose to his feet very suddenly, with a highly-bewildered expression on his face, no evidence of mirth remaining there. He reached his long arm around to the back of his linen coat as if he was in search of something there. I think he got it, for he brought his hand half-clenched back before him, with the muttered exclamation, "Darn ye!" then suddenly his hand



opened wide, and he jerked it about furiously, his fingers cracking together like whips. It was plainly evident that Mr. Jinks had stirred up another nest of bumble-bees, for immediately a dozen were buzzing about him. He had played a huge joke upon Phipps, and it had rebounded upon himself with a vengeance.

What could Jinks do but begin to prance around? Fred rose to his feet.

"Halloo, Jinks!" he shouted; "keep cool! stand still, and they won't hurt you! Jinks, keep cool, I say!"

That advice would be about as easy for a man in a powder magazine, with a train lit that would fire it, to follow, as it would have been for Jinks to do so. I don't think he heard Fred at all, for he was too deeply interested in something that he was trying to claw out of his hair as he ran. If Phipps looked ridiculous, Jinks was supremely so, coursing wildly about, in his long coat. I fancy there is nothing that can strike deeper terror to a man's heart than a bumble-bee, and those two acted as if they were mad with fright.

The climax was reached at length. Both were oblivious to all else but bumble-bees. A half dozen times they ran within a foot of each other. Finally their paths met squarely. As it chanced they were just at the brow of the hill, and colliding with tremendous force, both rolled over. As they disappeared, we heard the angry words:

"I say, Jinks—"

"Darn ye, Phipps—"

We rushed to the top of the hill; but their speed had been more rapid than ours, for we beheld them at its foot, lying together, contentedly, Phipps wrapped completely in the tail of Jinks's "freezer."

### CHAPTER III.

#### RIVALS.

MISS MINNIE RAY and I were in the parlor at Uncle John's. It was evening, and deliciously cool there. Huge trees shaded the house, and the breeze stole in through the open windows. The fragrance of the tea-rose and the heliotrope made the air heavy with sweetness. I must admit that I was enjoying myself hugely. Miss Minnie was a sweet, vivacious and refined little body, with a *petite* figure and the most bewitching of blue eyes and dimpled cheeks.

But there was a tread along the hall, and some one stopped unceremoniously at the parlor door which was open. I glanced in that direction, expecting to see some member of the family, when, instead, I beheld Mr. Jinks, linen coat and all, which had evidently not been damaged by the adventure of two days previous.

Mr. Jinks coolly took a survey of the apartment, and then stepped inside.

"How are ye, Miss Minnie?" he said, reaching out his hand towards her.

She arose, and gracefully gave him her hand. He grasped it in his great brown one.

"Mr. Walters," said Miss Minnie, "permit me to introduce to you my friend Mr. Jinks; Mr. Jinks, Mr. Walters."

I bowed to Mr. Jinks, and he said:

"Glad to make your acquaintance, squire."

Then he seated himself, and seemed to be as much at ease as if he had been accustomed to the society of pretty young ladies all the days of his life. Miss Minnie was very gracious to him.

I rather liked Mr. Jinks's cool off-hand style. I did not doubt that he was egotistical, and what I will term, if you will allow the expression, irresistibly impudent; but underneath all that was a vein of quaint common sense and drollery that impressed me favorably. He talked about his oats, and rye, oxen, pigs and—

"Mr. Jinks," said I, interrupting an animated description of some match calves that he possessed, "have you hived your bumble-bees yet?"

I think I ought not to have said that; but Mr. Jinks was monopolizing the conversation a little too much to suit me. I intended no discourtesy, but simply made it as a mischievous remark, to embarrass, if possible, the aforesaid gentleman.

Mr. Jinks colored, and coughed, and finally managed to commence:

"I can't say that I exactly understand you, squire. In this country we don't—"

He was interrupted by a ring at the door-bell. In a few moments a gentleman in "shining apparel" was ushered in. It was Mr. Lewis Phipps, who advanced towards Miss Minnie, bowing and smiling. She bowed to him, and then introduced him to me and also to Fred, who came in at that moment, as an acquaintance of hers. Mr. Phipps's presence seemed to be a sort of damper on the conversation. Even Mr. Jinks lost his volubility.

I suppose Mr. Phipps must have concluded that he was responsible for this state of affairs. At any rate he took steps towards remedying it; he began a conversation. For some reason or other he very graciously directed a great many of his remarks to me. I think he recognized me, and wished, under the circumstances, to make amends for the discourtesy of a few days previous.

"The balmy breezes, ah—of the country, are quite healthy, Mr. Walters," Mr. Phipps said.

"Yes sir," I answered.

"I presume that being in the country all the time, ah—you do not appreciate its sweetness as we city people do?"

Evidently Mr. Jinks mistook me for a member of the family. My reply was perhaps somewhat ambiguous:

"No sir."

Mr. Phipps ran his hand through his hair, and returned to the charge again.

"The scenery, ah—is quite attractive in this vicinity."

"Yes sir," was my reply.

Mr. Phipps flushed a little. I could scarcely refrain from laughing, while Fred and Miss Minnie seemed a little surprised. Mr. Jinks was watching us closely, and I fancied that I saw an expression of suppressed mirth in his gray eyes.

Mr. Phipps spoke once more.

"I fancy, ah—Mr. Walters, that there are, ah—some disadvantages to balance the attractions of the country?"

"Yes sir."

At that instant Mr. H. Jinks broke out into a fit of laughter that was apparently uncontrollable.

"Ha, ha! Phippsey!" he exclaimed; "it strikes me that you and Mr. Walters have met before."

"Yes, we have met before," I said, coolly.

"And, Phippsey, Mr. Walters is the gentleman that you froze, that's your term, with your monosyllables. Ha, ha! how is the joke, now, Phippsey?"

Mr. Phipps rose to his feet, and glared fiercely, first at me, and then at Jinks.

However, he seemed to conclude that that was scarcely a proper place for a display of anger, and choking it down, he seated himself again. But he did not remain much longer, rising presently and taking his leave. Mr. Jinks went with him, stating that he had some business to attend to.

"I suppose Mr. Phipps is quartered with

Hiram's father, who keeps a hotel in the suburbs of the town," said Fred, as they departed.

I explained the reason of my monosyllabic replies, to Miss Minnie and Fred. Both laughed, and she said:

"You ought to be ashamed, sir, for revenging yourself in that way."

I did not feel ashamed at all. In fact, I congratulated myself that I had been the means of teaching Mr. Phipps a lesson. He needed, most assuredly, something that would take some of the conceit and egotism out of him. Besides, in my catalogue of sins against etiquette, I esteemed none more flagrant than discourteous treatment of a perfect stranger, when there is no reason whatever for it.

I may as well state here what had brought Mr. Phipps to the neighborhood. I surmised then, and discovered positively afterwards, the reason. Miss Minnie Ray was the attraction that had drawn him. He had met her at a watering-place the summer previous, and had fallen desperately in love with her. The long and the short of it is that he had come out to the country to test his fate. I presume the dapper individual had no doubt whatever that he would succeed.

I suppose you can guess how he and Mr. Jinks concluded that I stood in relationship to Miss Minnie—Fred found it out shortly afterwards—I was her cousin, these obtuse gentlemen decided. Of course, as Fred was her cousin, all the junior Walters's must be. Fred had not corrected the mistake, and I entreated him to let it remain uncorrected, when he told me about it.

Dear reader, mentally I decided that Mr. Phipps and Mr. Jinks would have a rival in the person of one Thomas Walters. I was not greatly surprised when Mr. Phipps came to me and apologized for his *monosyllabic freezing* of myself on the train. I accepted the gentleman's apology, but with a mental protest that it was not sincere. I thought I understood Mr. Phipps. Miss Ray's *cousin* might prove a valuable ally.

By the law of the State, I may add, cousins could not marry.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A PROPOSAL.

ALL symptoms of the disease with which I had been threatened left me. The fresh-

ness, the sweetness, the balminess of the country acted upon me like an elixir, and my blood coursed, in the full tide of health, through my veins.

But another peculiar, and I believe I will say pleasurable disease, had seized hold of me. I know you can infer at once what it was. I fell in love, desperately and fully. I told you that I had mentally decided to be the rival of Phipps and Jinks. But that decision deepened into a resolve to marry Minnie Ray, if I could; that makes things sufficiently clear, does it not?

The days passed, and those two became more and more assiduous in their attentions. Both were altogether in earnest, and I presume both were tolerably confident of success. Mr. Phipps's egotism would not, of course, allow him to dream of defeat; and although Mr. Jinks did not show it so plainly, he possessed quite a fair share of confidence in himself.

Dear reader, do not decide too soon how this affair is to end. I beg leave to assure you that such things are very uncertain. I have known stranger affairs to happen, in the matrimonial line, than it would be for a Minnie Ray, sweet girl though she be, to wed a Jinks or even a Phipps.

I took the *cousinly* privilege of being Minnie's escort, generally on the occasion of picnics, fishing-parties, etc. I presume Mr. Jinks or Mr. Phipps would either have preferred that position. I suppose, however, that each one thought it was better it should be that way, than that the other should be the favored one. Having settled my *status* to their satisfaction, neither had any special fear of me.

I dare say that about this time we all began to experience kindred thoughts, each telling himself that an opportune time had arrived for a declaration of his love. For my part, I resolved, broke the resolve, and re-resolved that I would make my intentions plain to the object upon whom I had bestowed my heart. But—the days sped on, and I did not speak. I am positive, my dear George, or Dick, or Harry, that if you have ever been in love you understand my trouble. When a man realizes how greatly his happiness depends upon one little word from a woman, he is very apt to shrink instinctively from discovering what that word is to be. And though an avowal of his love may often tremble on his lips, it is often long before it is uttered.

I shall now relate how Mr. Phipps got even with H. Jinks, Esq., for the trick he had played, in stationing him on a bumble-bees' nest.

Miss Polly Green came as a seamstress to my Uncle John's house. I forget where she was from—it doesn't matter, anyway. Miss Green was neither fair nor fat, but she was forty, and evidently a person abundantly able to fight her way through the world. I protest in the beginning, that I rather liked Miss Green. True, her voice was quite loud, and her ways somewhat gushing; but one needn't expect perfection in a woman who has been knocked about over the world all the days of her life.

She and Mr. Jinks became quite friendly. I presume she made the advances, and he, of course, had no objections to her friendship. Poor innocent man! how could he know that Miss Green entertained designs on his heart? He was so desperately smitten by Miss Minnie's loveliness, that he was blind to everything else.

Mr. Jinks's way of making his love known was not the way I would have taken. I suppose his courage always failed him when in the presence of Miss Minnie. However, I will not anticipate, by stating immediately his method of procedure.

One afternoon, Mr. Phipps came to Uncle John's. Almost the first thing he said, was: "I believe, ah—that there is a young lady here by the name of Miss Polly Green?"

Fred and I were both present.

"Yes, there is," Fred answered.

"I have a letter for her, ah"—continued Mr. Phipps, as he drew forth the missive itself.

At that moment Miss Polly passed the parlor door.

"Halloo! Miss Green, here's a letter for you!" Fred exclaimed.

Miss Green received the letter and went on her way. In due time Mr. Phipps took his departure. Shortly after that I was in the parlor alone, when Miss Green came in. I was sitting by the window, thinking about—well, Miss Minnie Ray, when she entered and seated herself. She gave first a very audible sigh, and then said:

"Mr. Walters!"

"Well, what?" I questioned.

"Can I have the privilege of asking your advice upon a very important subject?"

"O certainly, Miss Green!" I answered.

She sighed again.

"It is such a delicate matter that I—scarcely know how to approach it."

She stopped, and I leaned back in my chair, wondering what was coming.

"I believe that I will show you a letter that I received a short time ago," Miss Green said.

I had no desire to peruse the letter, but she opened and spread it out before me. It was written in a large bold hand, and I took it in at a glance or two. Its contents were as follows:

"DEAR MISS,—I have for some time thought of telling you that I love you. I do so now, and ask you a question also. I, H. Jinks, love you; will you marry me?"

"I can think of nothing more to write at present. I will be over at eight o'clock.

"H. JINKS."

There it was, in plain black and white. But was it intended for Miss Polly Green? There was no name at the head from which to tell. I concluded that it was not my affair, but that there was a mistake, or—

"Miss Green, I am incapable of advising you in this matter, that is, with certainty that my advice would be correct," I said.

"Well, I have made up my mind," uttered Miss Green, "to accept. I only came to you, feeling my weakness, to ask you if you would advise me to change my mind. Dear me! I am not anxious to marry, but I fear a rejection might break the poor man's heart." And Miss Polly Green folded her hands with an air of meekness and resignation.

I was about to make a remark, when Fred strolled in, whistling the "Mocking Bird."

"There's Fred," I said, "he knows more about Mr. Jinks than I do."

I had about concluded that advice in this case would be offensive unless given in accordance with Miss Green's decision.

Straightway she laid her case before Fred. That worthy young man walked to the window, stuck his head out, smiled, returned to Miss Green's side, and said, gravely:

"Hiram's a splendid fellow!"

Miss Green smiled her gratitude. I learned afterwards that she had asked the advice of Uncle John, Aunt Sarah and Miss Minnie Ray, upon the subject.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE INTERVIEW.

"I must see this interview!"

Fred and I were out in the orchard, and those were the words he was saying.

"It is scarcely practicable that you can," I suggested.

"I think I can manage it without any trouble," he rejoined. "It won't be—pshaw! it will be hugely amusing, and my hearing can't do any harm. I can get behind the curtains in the parlor."

"Hiram said eight; it is about time he was here," I said.

"Yonder he comes now!" exclaimed Fred. "Here goes!" And he hurried towards the house, entering it as Mr. Jinks came up the path by which I remained.

"Good-evening, Mr. Jinks," I said, as he passed me.

"Fine evening," he returned.

"Go on up to the house," I said; "I will be there presently."

He passed on. I noticed that he seemed a little embarrassed. Still, I could not help smiling as I thought of the probability of the wrong person's being in waiting for him.

He entered the parlor in his usual uncere- monious fashion. Fred told me afterwards. Miss Green was not there, but entered a moment later. It was well for Fred's plan that she was not there before. If she had been, he would, of course, have been disappointed.

She spoke before Jinks could utter a word.

"The object of your affections is not ashamed to let you know that your love is returned," was her melo-dramatic utterance.

"Ah, indeed!" said Hiram, in a style that was worthy of Phipps.

Miss Green advanced closer to him.

"My best beloved, I fly gladly to your protecting arms. This moment is the most joyful day of my life!" she continued.

Evidently she did not consider any preliminaries necessary. Her dear Hiram must be relieved of suspense immediately, of course. That worthy gentleman did not seem to comprehend. He fidgeted uneasily about, stuck his hands in his pockets, and gazed in her face, as evidently bewildered as if she had spoken to him in Greek.

"Dear Hiram, welcome me to your arms. Is the joy greater than you can bear?"

"I—I—" That was all he could manage to articulate.

"Ah! I understand the depths of your emotions," cried Miss Green. "They are too great for utterance. Dear Hiram, I will soothe you to coolness." And she threw her arms about his neck.

"Woman, go away!" gasped Hiram, finding his tongue at last. "Let me alone. Are —are you crazy?"

It was now Miss Green's turn to be astonished.

"What do you mean?" she inquired, in a more matter-of-fact tone than she had yet used.

"What do *you* mean?" returned Hiram.

Miss Green was not to be bluffed so easily.

"I comprehend you, dear Hiram," she said; "you are only testing my love."

Mr. Jinks had been rapidly recovering from his embarrassment. Now, Richard was himself again.

"Darn it, Miss Green!" he exclaimed; "I must own I can't see the point to all this. Just allow me to say that I do not—"

She began to sob.

"I understand you; you are like all the rest, fickle and changeable."

Now that Hiram had got his wits to working, he was shrewd enough to see that some mistake had been made.

"I reckon, Miss Green," he returned, "that you must kind of misunderstand something that I have said to you."

"No, I don't," cried Miss Green, her voice keying up to an angry note. "You asked me to marry you, and now—"

"Darn me, if I did any such thing!" ejaculated Mr. Jinks. "I'll swear I never did."

"But I say you did."

"Now, dog-gone it, don't be ridiculous, Miss Green," Hiram uttered. "I s'pose I ought to know whom I have asked to marry me."

"And I ought to know who asks me," put in Miss Polly; "specially when I have it in clear black and white."

She drew forth Hiram's letter and continued, "Base deceiver, do you deny this?"

Hiram glanced at the letter, hemmed and hawed, and stammered out:

"Darn me, where did you get that?"

"Phipps—"

"Confound Phipps! I'll murder him," cried Mr. Jinks, excitedly. "That letter was for Miss Minnie, blast him!"

"It wasn't for her. I'll sue you for breach of promise. You are a scoundrel, Jinks, that's what you are, to outrage a poor wo-

man's feelings in this way. The letter was addressed to me, and you have just done this to break my heart." And Miss Green wept plentifully.

"The letter that I wrote wasn't directed to you, but to Miss Minnie Ray; darn me, if it wasn't. Where's the envelop?"

"I—I don't know; I've lost it," sobbed Miss Green. "Go! leave me, heartless wretch that you are."

Mr. Jinks seized his hat, and vanished away as wildly as the hero of a three volume novel could from the presence of the tyrannical father of his lady-love.

## CHAPTER VI.

### JINKS'S REVENGE.

THE next morning I was seated alone under a tree by the side of a stream that flowed within about a mile of Uncle John's residence. I had been there but a short time when Mr. Phipps passed within a little distance of where I was seated. He did not behold me, and I said nothing to him. He did see somebody, however, when he had progressed a few yards further, for Mr. H. Jinks stood in the path directly before him.

"Halloo! Phippsey, I have been looking for you down this way," said Hiram.

"Ah! indeed," returned Mr. Phipps.

"I have a little settlement to make with you," Hiram pursued.

Of course Mr. Phipps could do nothing but stop.

"Now darn me, Phippsey," added Jinks, "you're going to catch it."

"What have I done, eh?" whimpered Phipps.

"To whom was that letter I gave you yesterday directed. Phippsey?"

"To no one, 'pon my honor."

Mr. Jinks seemed nonplussed for the moment.

"Darn me, if I know whether it was or not!" he ejaculated, as his anger appeared to cool a little.

But this turn in his temper lasted only a moment.

"I say, then, to whom did I tell you to give it?"

"To Miss Minnie Ray."

"And to whom did you promise to give it?"

"To Miss Ray—O!"

"And why didn't you?" cried Hiram, fiercely, seizing him by the collar.

If Mr. Phipps had taken a thought he might have escaped from that scrape, at least for the time. But he was too much frightened to think to the point, so, instead of stating that he gave the letter to Fred, he said instead:

"I gave it to her, Mr. Jinks."

"You didn't," ejaculated Hiram, angrily, "and I'm going to duck you for the trick you have played me."

He dragged Phipps towards the stream, which here flowed swiftly along. The banks were only a couple of feet high, but entirely perpendicular, while the stream was quite deep.

Phippsey struggled, but he was a mere child in Hiram's hands. The verge was soon reached.

"Now, in you go," exclaimed Jinks; "and the less you struggle the better, for if you happen to get loose you're a goner. I can't swim a lick."

Souse! went Phipps under the water, Jinks stooping over the bank so as to duck him effectually.

"O! ah! puh!" puffed Phipps as he was lifted out.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Hiram; "twice more, and I'll let you off for this time."

"Please don't," whined Phipps, wiping the water from his eyes. "Please don't, and I'll—"

"Over you go again," interrupted Hiram. "Mind what I said about kickin'!"

I do not think that Mr. Phipps kicked much, but, nevertheless, a catastrophe occurred upon which H. Jinks had not calculated. Phipps's collar gave way, and Jinks straightened up with only that in his hand.

He stood for a moment in utter bewilderment, seemingly not comprehending the situation, staring in a vacant sort of way at that piece of a coat. But it was only for a moment, and then he rolled himself on the earth.

"Murder! help! thieves!" he yelled. "O, darn my skin, I've killed him. Halloo!" An instant later he crawled close to the edge of the bank. "O Phippsey, Phippsey," he entreated, "don't drown, and I'll forgive you!"

Mr. Phipps was quite regardless of Hiram's supplication. I had started in that direction at the earliest possible moment after I had beheld the catastrophe. Reaching the bank, I saw Phipps's head pop up from the water a dozen yards below. It was plain that he

could not swim, and would drown unless I saved him. I am an excellent swimmer, and running a few yards further down the stream, I plunged in. I reached Mr. Phipps just as his head appeared above the water again. As I grasped him I heard a female voice—the voice of Minnie Ray—cry out:

"O Mr. Jinks, what is the matter?"

"Mr. Walters fell in, and Phippsey jumped in after him," returned H. Jinks, intelligibly. Evidently his wits were still frightened away.

By a hard struggle I succeeded in getting to the bank. But we were still in a dangerous situation, for, owing to the steepness of the bank, I was unable to raise myself and my burden out of the water. As to whether Jinks was within fifty yards or not, I could not tell.

I managed to keep Mr. Phipps's head above the water, and the current carried us along. At last, when I was nearly exhausted, and beginning to despair, the bank became lower, and sloping besides. We were safe, for with a stroke or two I was in shallow water. In another instant I had laid Phipps on the shore, and fallen exhausted a few feet away. Phipps's face was hid in his arm.

I was not prepared for what occurred. Miss Ray rushed up, and throwing herself on the half-unconscious form of Phipps, cried:

"O my love, my love is dead!"

Dear reader, imagine my sensations if you can! I had saved this man from death, to hear the woman whom I loved with all my heart weep out over him that which she had kept hidden in her bosom all this time. I did not regret what I had done, but at that moment all the glory and brightness seemed to depart forever from my life.

## CHAPTER VII.

### I PACK MY TRUNK.

It is not to be supposed that I could lie there and hear *her* lament for Phipps dead, when he was no more dead than I was. The hearing of those words nerved me, my exhaustion departed as if by magic, and springing to my feet, I rushed away.

I had paid no attention as to whither I was going, but I soon discovered that I was approaching Uncle John's residence. Hastening up through the orchard, I encountered Fred.

"Why, halloo! Tom, what in the name of sense is the matter?" he burst out.

"Nothing much," I said, coolly; "Jinks stuck Phipps in the river, and I pulled him out, that's all."

"Well, that's enough!" ejaculated Fred, as I left him.

I reached the house, and dressed myself in dry clothing as quickly as possible. However, I did not pause when I had finished that, but proceeded to pack all of my property at Uncle John's in my trunk.

Fred came in just as I had finished.

"Halloo! what does this mean?" he said.

I had no intention of keeping any of the facts in the case from him, so I answered immediately:

"I am going home."

"The mischief!" he exclaimed, in astonishment; "I don't comprehend why you should hurry off in this style."

"I am going on the first train," I said; "and I will tell you why."

"Well, proceed," he said, as I paused.

I commenced and told him how matters stood.

"Pshaw!" he ejaculated, when I had finished; "I'm sure I can't see how a girl of Minnie's sense can love such a popinjay as Phipps undoubtedly is."

"Your comprehending or not comprehending doesn't change matters," I said, dolefully; "the fact remains the same."

"Well, you shall not go anyway at present," said Fred.

"I most certainly will," I replied.

"You can't go till morning, for there is no train till then."

I bit my lip.

"Of course, my going will have to be governed by that," I said.

The day passed slowly away. I did not leave my room till late in the afternoon. Then I slipped out into the orchard. I had not been there long when I beheld Mr. Phipps coming up through it. He did not see me, but proceeded to the house.

I laid down beneath a tree. I suppose it sounds very ridiculous under the circumstances, but—I went to sleep. I slept some time, I think. I was awakened by the voice

of some one standing over me. I opened my eyes and beheld Fred.

"Are they married?" I asked. I could scarcely have been wide awake. Fred laughed loudly.

"No, you goose, of course not," he uttered. "Rather sudden 'twould be, 'pon my word."

"I don't think they will be, either," he added, a moment later. "My ears are uncommonly large, you know, for a youth of my age, and permit me to say that Mr. Phipps has received his answer. That answer was a very emphatic *no*. She was a little vexed about something, I think, and he was greatly taken aback, for—"

Fred stopped and began to whistle. As for me, imagine the sensations of a man lifted from despair to hope, and you will understand mine.

"Phipps is gone," continued Fred; "and if you hurry up to the house, I think you will find Minnie in the parlor. I advise you to go to her immediately."

I waited for no more, but hurried away. Minnie was sitting in the parlor with her head bowed in her hands. She sprang to her feet as I entered. Her face crimsoned with blushes, and she started to leave the room. I saw my happiness at last, and springing forward seized both her hands in mine.

"Minnie, dear Minnie, I love you with all my heart!" I cried, passionately and abruptly.

She did not try to release herself. She burst into tears, and her head fell on my shoulder.

"I thought Mr. Phipps was you this morning," she said, between her sobs, "and—"

"Never mind that now," I whispered. "Minnie, my love, will you marry me?"

She lifted her head till her eyes met mine. Her face was radiant, and—

\* \* \* \* \*

"There, sir that is enough."

A fair hand has seized mine and taken my pen away. I kiss the owner of the hand.

Dear reader, allow me to present to you my wife Mrs. Minnie Walters, once Miss Minnie Ray.



## JOE'S REWARD.

BY MRS. R. B. EDSON.

"JOSEPH," said Mrs. Clayton, putting her head out the door, "you will have to go over to Alston to meet Linda's girls. The boys have gone down the river with Henderson, and may not be home till dark, and I wrote to Linda that we would meet them there."

The young man addressed looked up from a book he was reading, and asked, a little impatiently, "why Linda's children were to be sent there—why weren't they kept at home?"

A faint smile flitted over the pleasant matronly face, and an amused expression lurked in the sunny eyes.

"Cousin Linda isn't very well this summer," she said, quietly. "Besides, they live in an inland town, and it is a treat for the girls to come to the sea-board. You'll go?"

"O, of course." And he resumed his reading.

Mrs. Clayton laughed a little, softly to herself, as she busied herself about her work, and three hours after, when Joe came in to get ready to go to the Alston station, some two miles away, the amused look was still in her eyes.

"I suppose this is the last quiet afternoon I shall get till those children have gone home again," he said, in a regretful tone. "You mustn't let them into my room, mother, when I'm away. I'll take care they don't get in when I am there!"

"I don't believe they will attempt to, Joseph, but I'll tell them," she said, soberly. "I do not suppose you want them playing with your chest of tools—"

"No; and I can't have them, either," he interrupted; "nor ransacking my cabinet,

and overturning the books to find pictures, as young ones invariably do. They are eight or nine years old by this time, I suppose. I remember Linda brought them here once, and I haven't thought of them since."

"I should think they were all of ten," Mrs. Clayton rejoined, the merry expression deepening in her eyes. "Suppose they were young ladies, Joe!" And she laughed gayly.

"They might walk over from Alston, for all me!" he answered, shortly, coloring to the temples, and all over the broad, white massive forehead.

The truth was, Joe Clayton was terribly bashful wherever a woman was concerned. It was constitutional, and he couldn't help it, and "didn't want to," he said, with a little shiver, when the subject was up for discussion, as it frequently was. Joe was a splendid fellow, handsome, straight as an arrow, broad-shouldered, and measuring nearly six feet, but the merest chit of a girl could put him to flight. "'Twas ever thus from childhood's hour," for the faintest shadow of a pair of pantalets and a worsted hood on the little mill-pond where they skated at noon-time and recess, always sent Joe over the fence and back to the schoolhouse in double quick. And when, on rainy days, they all carried their dinners, and played "Copenhagen," and "on the carpet I do stand," at noontime, in the great entry, Joe was in a perfect tremor of bashful terror, for if he refused to play he was no better off, for those dreadful girls would kiss him without any provocation whatever. Poor Joe! if it had not been for fear of punishment at home, he would have gone out and sat in the rain;



and sometimes he did, bearing the punishment with a sort of grim delight.

Between him and his twin brothers, Frank and Robert, there was the widest possible difference in this respect. *They* took to girls as naturally as ducks take to water. Need I add that they were therefore the favorites? With not half of Joe's good looks, or half of his real worth of mind and heart, they were comforted while he was tormented.

It is one of the most mysterious and contradictory problems that I ever attempted to solve, why a shy, diffident man finds so little favor among women. He may be handsome as Apollo, pure, honest, chivalrous, and yet nine women in ten will choose some gay, dashing fellow, with very uncertain morals, but plenty of assurance and impertinence. It is the only real argument for the innate depravity of the feminine heart that I ever met. If anybody can give an explanation, they would confer a favor on the subscriber by communicating, etc.

It was a delightful afternoon, this on which Joe Clayton rode leisurely over the grass-bordered country road to Alston station. There had been a heavy rain the night before, and the sandaled road was washed hard and clean, and not the faintest atom of dust floated in the soft liquid air. A cool west wind tempered the warmth of a July sun, and altogether it was a perfect midsummer day.

Joe was an ardent lover of nature, and he half forgot "Linda's girls," in his enjoyment of the beautiful scenery, for the Alston road wound round soft wooded hills, and past still shadowed ponds, with a lovely river looking out here and there through the leafy openings—a gloss of satin on an emerald gown—and now and then, as the road wound up the hill, little glimpses of the far-away misty sea. But the chimneys of Alston—it was all Alston, only this was the village proper—broke in upon his vision, and with a start he gathered up the reins, and came back to a realization of life and Linda's girls.

"I am not sure but I ought to have come with the carriage," he said, glancing down at the light open buggy; "but this is so much easier and lighter, and the little girls won't require a very large carriage, and it's not likely they'll have more than a small trunk or a valise."

He was none too soon, for even then the cars were shrieking and thundering along in full sight. He sprang out and hurried round to the side where the passengers were getting

out and in. He had a vague idea that he should know Linda's girls instantly he saw them. To his mind's eye they were slight, rather freckled-faced, with very light hair shingled pretty close, and attired in pink muslin dresses and white sunbonnets. This picture rose involuntarily to his mind at the first mention of Linda's girls, and he accepted it without stopping to reason upon its probable accuracy. The fact was, he had hardly thought of them at all till this afternoon, when he had been forcibly drafted into the service of escort.

The hurry and bustle began to subside, and the cars moved slowly away from the station. There was an unusual number of passengers on the platform, but Joe looked in vain for any one bearing even the remotest resemblance to "Linda's girls." In fact, there were but two children, one of those a very important little fellow, in, very evidently, his first trowsers, and the other a baby in arms. Neither of these could be Linda's, he decided very readily, and with a vague feeling of mingled relief and disappointment, he was turning to go down the steps when somebody touched his arm. He turned hastily and met the full battery of three pairs of eager eyes. If it had been a battery of deadly howitzers, pointed straight at his heart, he would have felt supremely happy, comparatively speaking.

"How far is it to Mr. Charles Clayton's?" asked the one who had touched his arm. "We want to go there; could we walk as far?"

"I—I don't know; yes, perhaps," he stammered, painfully conscious that three pairs of roguish lips were trying very hard to keep from smiling at his very evident embarrassment.

"To which of my questions is this an answer?" asked the tallest girl, who acted as spokeswoman, an unmistakable sparkle of mirth in her brown eyes.

"Whichever you please," he responded, with crimsoning face, and springing down the steps he turned his horse's head, and went spinning towards home as if a thousand demons were after him.

"Good heavens! what could I do?" he exclaimed, the cold sweat starting from every pore. "I couldn't take three women in this little shell." And the bare idea of being packed in such close quarters with three girls, for a mile or two drive, sent the blood to his face in a torrent. "I wish I knew

who they were," he continued; "I wish they might get lost, and never find their way here. And I made such a stupid fool of myself! I don't care, I'd not taken them, and I should have had to if I had revealed that Charles Clayton was my father. Those three flounced and ruffled things! each of them would more than fill the seat. No, I'd not taken them in for all the money in the United States!"

"I am sure it is he," said the tall brown-eyed girl, to her companions on the platform, when Joe had so incontinently fled from their presence. "I have never forgotten how he looked when we were there, Madge, and you know we've always heard how ridiculously bashful he is. Wont we have sport, girls!" And the brown eyes fairly danced with delight.

Just then the station-master came by, and glanced up at them and at the three large trunks beside them.

"You want a carriage, ladies?" he asked, politely.

"Not for ourselves, we will walk; but if you would send our trunks up to Mr. Clayton's—Mr. Charles Clayton's—we should like it. And if you would direct us a little about the way, we should still be more obliged."

"Mr. Clayton's? why, his son was here a moment ago;" then, smiling, "do you know Mr. Joseph Clayton?"

"We are strangers, sir," she replied, a little stiffly.

He bowed, and then gave them the necessary information concerning the way, and turned back to his office, smiling a little to himself, and wishing he had come out in season to have packed them in with Joe. "T'would have been worth fifty dollars!" he said enthusiastically, to himself.

Great was Mrs. Clayton's surprise to see her son return alone; for, aside from her desire to see her cousin's girls, she had anticipated a little quiet joke at Joe's expense.

"You are sure you would know Jennie and Madge?" she asked, a little anxiously.

"Of course I am," was the confident reply. "I remember their looks perfectly."

"Do you know how long it is since you saw them?"

"Not precisely; three or four years, perhaps."

"Joseph Clayton," she said, in a tone of vexation, "I believe you never remember anything only what you read in books, and those everlasting rules of construction and mensuration! and mercy knows what; with

the garret all the time littered up with tools, and plans, and things. I declare, I've no patience left. I dare say you expect Linda's girls are in short dresses now."

"Mother," he exclaimed, hastily, a terrible suspicion rushing to his brain, "how old are Linda's girls?"

"Well, Jennie is eighteen, and Madge is almost seventeen," she replied, with a little feeling of malicious delight. "It is nine years since they were here, and Jennie was nine then, only she was very small of her age, and, for that matter, so was Madge."

"Why didn't you tell me, mother!" a look of blank dismay settling over his face.

"Didn't you say if they were young ladies they might walk?"

"And they may!" he said, emphatically.

"I wouldn't make myself ridiculous, Joe Clayton!" she said, a good deal vexed; "I do not think they would have eaten you—leastwise, I wouldn't if I were a young woman."

"There's nothing like keeping at a safe distance," Joe retorted, with a cross-humored laugh, followed by a burning blush, as he remembered the little episode at Alston station, and the almost certainty that those three girls were Linda's, and at that moment were on their way there. Then he suddenly reflected that Linda had but two girls, and who was this third one? Well, she couldn't make it much worse; one wouldn't make much difference, not any to him, for he intended to keep well out of their way, and with this consoling thought he ran up to his room, locked himself in, and in fifteen minutes had forgotten the whole perplexing subject, in his absorption in a plan of a village lot, on which he was engaged, and which he was to take to its location, and duly survey and "lay out" that week.

"Joseph, Joseph!" suddenly roused him from his work, and brought him to a sense of surrounding things.

"Yes, mother," he answered, still a little absently.

"Come now, right away; supper is all ready," came in a brisk tone from the foot of the stairs.

He folded up his papers reluctantly, his mind still busy with the location of the church and the "common," which had been expressly stipulated to be "picturesquely situated." More from force of habit than from any particular thought of his personal appearance, he stood a moment before the little gilt-framed mirror, which hung between the

windows, and brushed back the wavy mass of dark hair from the broad handsome forehead. There was a faint flush of excitement in the thoughtful face, there always was when he worked, and the great dreamy eyes had a look of smouldering fire in their shadowy depths. There was no disputing the fact that Joe Clayton was a splendid looking man, and this was the first thought of the three young ladies who confronted him at the sitting-room door. The next instant there was a little provoking peal of girlish laughter, in which—Joe noticed this, despite his embarrassment—but two voices, beside his mother's, joined.

"You see we were fortunate enough to find some one who *did* know where Mr. Clayton lived," said the tall brown-eyed girl, taking upon herself, as before, the office of spokeswoman. "Such a magnificent walk as we have had! all but Wardie; you might have taken her, Cousin Joe."

"I—I didn't know—" stammered Joe, in painful embarrassment.

"O, of course you didn't," she interrupted; "you hadn't made allowance for improvements! You can take us to ride another time, which will be just as well," she added, with a little wicked glance from under her long lashes. "Now, Madge," she said, sweetly, "come up here and kiss your cousin." And to Joe's infinite confusion, the laughing Madge obeyed literally. He wouldn't have minded, he thought, if *she* hadn't been there.

"Cousin Joe," went on this dreadful girl, "this is our dear friend Wardie, whom we brought with us, particularly on your account, remembering your quiet habits, and your horror of "romps and hoydens," to which class you very ungallantly assigned Madge and I, the last time we were here. Miss Reward Hastings, Cousin Joe, Mr. Clayton, Wardie. Now you may get acquainted," she added, benevolently.

Joe was vaguely conscious of a soft little hand just fluttering across his palm, and of a pair of shy blue eyes which wavered and fell before his glance. This was a new sensation, indeed! Under its stimulating influence he ventured another and more comprehensive glance at the young lady. This time he saw a petite little figure, clad in some sort of pale filmy-blue stuff, with long pendants of milky pearls in the little seashell-tinted ears, half hidden, as they were, by a luxurious wealth of short flossy ash-and-gold curls.

If there is anything that can make one feel

brave it is the presence of one less courageous than himself. Joe saw the wavering color in the sensitive face of lovely little Wardie Hastings, and his own courage rose accordingly. "I shan't mind her; she won't trouble me," he said to himself, with a feeling of boldness, amounting almost to heroism. I wish I could truthfully add that his subsequent conduct corroborated this declaration of valor. On the contrary, after a little time he grew even more painfully embarrassed in her presence than he had ever been before in his life. It certainly could not have been because she was bold and forward, as he inwardly called Linda's girls, when they teased him to take them drives and sails, and insisted upon coming into his workroom to see his plans, and models, and books, soberly averring that they "only wanted to see the pictures!"

And yet one shy quick glance from Wardie Hastings's soft eyes bewildered and unnerved him more than all their merciless teasings and badinage. But if Joe was afraid of her, it soon became quite evident that Robert was not. It was not in Robert's nature to be particularly afraid of any girl; but there was something in this gentle, shy, sensitive little creature that at once challenged that innate love of pursuit which is so largely inherent in the masculine human nature.

Sometimes Joe fancied that she shrank just a little from his brother's attentions, marked as they were by his naturally gay, rollicking, demonstrative spirit. But Robert was not easily abashed or set aside. He had a way of forcing himself into one's good graces, whether they would or no. A capital fellow to storm the outworks of reserve, or lead a forlorn hope in love's crusade; gay, good-humored, genial, but without those finer shades of thought and feeling, and those lofty and tender sentiments of heart and mind which was the predominant trait in Joe's character and disposition. And yet, as I said before, Robert was considered "splendid," and Joe, who had twice the chivalrous and delicate spirit of love in his heart for woman, was a legitimate subject for their indifference or ridicule.

Frank, who was much like Robert, only a little less assured and somewhat quieter, was engaged to a young lady in the neighborhood, and as the wedding was to take place during his cousins' visit, and the time for devotion and preference being so short (there would be no necessity for those things afterwards, as every observer knows), he certainly

could not be expected to pay the ladies any but the most casual attentions. And so poor Joe was drafted into service. They had come down there to have a good time, and they fully intended to have it. They invaded Joe's hours of labor, study and leisure. They came upon him at all times and in all places, and got him into all manner of difficult and ridiculous situations. Only when locked in his chamber for the night did he feel a perfect sense of safety and peace. More than once it was upon his tongue's end to wish them home again, but something always came up in his heart with a dull, painful thud, and sent the wish back, leaving only the faintest echo of a sigh in its place.

Meanwhile, the intimacy between Robert and Wardie Hastings had assumed a character which afforded subject for raillery, and sometimes serious comment.

"I'll confess I'm a little surprised," Jennie said, one day, in a confidential mood, to Joe, as she watched the plan he was sketching grow into grace and proportion. "For the first few days after we came I was morally certain the desire of my heart would be gratified."

"What was it, pray?" he asked, looking up.

"To see Reward Hastings your wife," she said, boldly. "It was just what I brought her here for. I'll never attempt to make another match as long as I live—so!" And a really troubled look showed itself in the laughing brown eyes, and something like a flush stole up to the gipsyish cheek. "You see," she went, on, rapidly, not noticing the terrible blunder he made just then in the line he was drawing, "Reward is the dearest little girl in the world, but she has got some fine ideal notions of love and marriage, and she is altogether too bright and good for human nature's daily food. I mean—you know, she is too proud, and shy, and sensitive, and has too exalted ideas of men and things to be happy with the average man. Now, Cousin Joe—I'm not teasing now—I don't know of another man in the world that would so nearly come up to Wardie's ideal as yourself."

"And yet Robert and I are quite unlike," he said, in an odd, constrained voice.

"Yes, I know." And then she fell into a very unusual silence which lasted for several minutes, Joe, meanwhile, drawing line after line with a firm steady hand. Suddenly, with a little nervous shiver, she caught the paper away.

"Not another line, Joe Clayton," she cried, "unless you want to drive me distracted! I've heard of the dripping theory, but what are a few drops of water on one's head, compared to those horribly straight lines you draw, and draw, and draw! Come! It's growing dark, and just hear the wind! It is going to storm; there! it thunders." She caught his arm in her excitement and drew him to the door.

"It is only the tide coming in," he said, looking off toward the long line of rock and sand which outlined the beach. Then, as the white spray dashed over the gray, dimly-defined ledges, he added, "There is a strong wind, sure enough. See how misty the sea is."

Madge came out the kitchen door, her sleeves pinned to her shoulders, and a check apron enveloping her like a cloud. Madge had a domestic turn, and had been experimenting in sugar gingerbread.

"You poor useless butterflies! just look at me," she cried, holding up her check apron as a sort of symbolic representation of labor. "Go to the ant, thou sluggards! Where's Wardie?" she interrupted, suddenly, looking startled; "isn't she with you, Jennie?"

"No, I haven't seen her these two hours; why?"

"See if she is in her room, Robert," Madge cried, breathlessly. "You see," she explained, as Robert called out that she was not there, "she asked me to go down to the rocks with her, but I had some work to do, and had promised to help about supper, or at least had been promised that I might. She said she would find you, and as I had not seen either of you since, I supposed you were both there."

A heavy peal of thunder broke with a sudden crash upon their ears, and the wind blew a few great fugitive drops of rain against the leaves and the window panes with a dull splash.

"My God!" Joe cried, sharply, and with a bound sprang away down the path, closely followed by Robert.

"O dear, what can it be?" Madge sobbed, hurrying on after them, her long apron swaying and flapping in the wind, and threatening every moment to trip her up.

"It is something serious to excite him," Mrs. Clayton said. "I hope she isn't out on the rocks in this wind, with such a sea as this going."

"Is it any of your folks, Mrs. Clayton?" a neighbor asked, opening her window.

Another heavy peal of thunder, and then a fierce blinding sheet of rain that blew directly in their faces, completely drowned their voices. But still the three women struggled on, till suddenly Madge gave a low awed cry, and pointed to a long narrow ledge of gray rock, some fifty feet from the shore. The water was dashing and swirling madly against it, the white spray rising into the air as it beat against its sides, and midway, her bare feet clinging to the rock, her dripping garments fluttering in the wind, stood Reward Hastings. She stood erect, her face pale as her white robe, her eyes reverently uplifted.

There were a dozen men on the shore, and half as many boats, two of which had already been swamped in the effort to get them off.

"It is no use," said Mr. Clayton—he and Frank had seen her as they came up the Alston road, and had reached there simultaneously with Joe and Robert—"it's no use trying to launch a boat in this sea."

Joe struggled ashore; he had been in the first boat, and had been knocked senseless for an instant or two, by the oar, when the boat capsized. His face was deadly white now, and his lips had that blue pallid look, the counterpart of death.

"What are you going to do?" Robert asked, as he began deliberately divesting himself of coat, vest and boots.

"Can you ask?" he answered, an angry light flaming in his eyes.

Robert colored, shuddered and turned away.

"I can't do it, Joe! Life is too dear, and you know it is certain destruction. Don't go," putting out his hand pleadingly; "you cannot save her, and it is only throwing your life away; don't go!"

"I shall find it again somewhere; I am not afraid," he replied, with a grave smile. "Only," and he spoke low and hurriedly, "if I do not come back, comfort mother, and tell her to try and forget all the trouble or pain I ever caused her."

An instant more and he was striking out for the rock, with what seemed to the awed and pained watchers a sort of superhuman strength.

Reward no longer stood erect; but slightly stooping, her arms involuntarily reaching forward, her whole face, attitude and expression, one of breathless, anxious pain, it was easy to see how utterly she had forgotten her own peril in his.

All this time the rain came down in torrents, and the clouds, cleft in twain, emitted

fiery tongues of flame that licked the hills, trembling with the long roll of reverberating echoes. Suddenly a shout rose from the watchers—a shout that rose loud and clear above the bellowing of the tempest or the roaring of the sea.

"Thank God!" burst from the white lips of Mrs. Clayton, as, dizzy and trembling, she sank down upon the dripping sands.

Joe had reached the rock, and stood beside Miss Hastings. His dark hair made his face look deathly white, but there was no trace of fear or diffidence in it now. The water dashed over the rock when the strongest waves came in, but he showed no symptom of hurry or excitement! He knew he must rest a little before making another effort, and one so fraught with peril as this must be. Alone, he might possibly succeed, but with her!—well, he could try; perhaps he could save *her*; he would be content with that, he thought.

"Joe," she laid her little white hand on his arm half pleadingly half caressingly, "will you do something for me—something I would rather have you do than save my life? I deserve to suffer for my carelessness in coming here, and forgetting about the tide."

"What better can I do," he asked, wonderingly, "than save your life?"

"Save your own," she said, softly. "It is worth a score of mine."

"Is it worth anything to you, Wardie?" he asked, bending over and looking straight into her eyes; "if it is, all the waters of the Atlantic cannot drown me."

"O Joe! it is everything to me. I—I thought you knew it, and despised me for it, and that was why you avoided me so," she said, falteringly.

There was no audible reply, for at that instant a monster wave came foaming and dashing against the rock, and she felt herself held firmly in his strong grasp, and then the waters closed about them, and she knew that life and death hung trembling in the balance, and then one swift wild fear that she might escape and he be lost came over her, and then a long, long blank.

Meanwhile, the waiters on the shore had not been idle, and two other boats had been pushed out towards the rock, and strong arms were ready to receive them the instant they could be reached. There was a little moment of intense breathless watching, and then such a shout as went up from that half score of throats!

Poor Joe! he was very glad to lie in the bottom of the boat while fresher arms drew it carefully to land. And though the dripping tangle of ash-and-gold curls fell over Robert's arm, he experienced only a feeling of perfect and utter content.

You may be sure Joe Clayton was a hero after that. Jennie and Madge went into ecstasies over his bravery, and for once, Robert and Frank were cast completely in the shade by their diffident brother.

"I shall never forget how grand and courageous he looked when he threw off his coat and prepared to plunge into that terrible whirlpool of death!" Jennie said, enthusiastically, to Robert and Frank. "I was so proud of him! I shall never cease to despise myself for the ungenerous part I have taken toward him since I have been here. I wish there was something I could do to make him know how infinitely above us all he has been all the time, in my present judgment."

"Yes, Jennie," Frank said, with an odd attempt to look grave, "but a *present Reward* is more satisfactory to Joe, I fancy, by a little episode I unwittingly witnessed an hour ago."

"You don't mean—?" pausing blankly.

"I mean that Joe has got his Reward," he interrupted, laughing. "At least, he did have when I last saw him, and seemed altogether content with it beside. I don't believe he'll care a straw for your appreciation now, Jen," he added, as he turned away.

"Couldn't you manage to transfer it to me, Jennie?" Robert asked, with a laugh,

yet with a faint look of eagerness in his face.

"You! Why, you were a coward, Rob, you know you were," she answered, laughing.

"I shouldn't have been if it had been you, Jennie."

"Nonsense!" And then Miss Jennie very unwisely blushed, a signal which Robert knew—or at least thought—meant encouragement.

I think I have mentioned that Robert Clayton wasn't greatly troubled with diffidence; likewise, that nine women out of ten dislike a bashful man. Put that and that together, under the old rule that two negatives make an affirmative, and you have just the answer that Rob got.

"I don't think you are half as good as Joe," she said, candidly, "but then, neither am I. I don't think you are hardly good enough for Wardie, and Joe is."

"And he is very welcome to his Reward, for all me," Robert laughed; "you know I never cared for her, dear Jennie; how could I, with you here?"

I am sorry to add that Jennie was weak enough to believe this; perhaps more because she wanted to, than from any real element of truth it may have contained, however. As for Robert, the charm of a new love quite obliterated the old, and he was quite ready to swear that he "never thought of loving anybody but Cousin Jen." And she believed this too! Alas for the credulity of women—some of them, I mean; Heaven increase the strong-minded ones; there's a "plentiful lack" of them now, all the world knows.

## JOHN MERRILL'S SECRET.

BY W. H. MACY.

AMONG the heterogeneous crowd who were to be my shipmates in the *Amphion*, I was particularly attracted to a slender youth from one of the back counties of New York State, who signed his name on the papers as John Merrill. He was nearly my own age, I judged; and there was an air of quiet refinement about him, strikingly in contrast with the rude, boisterous character of the majority of our associates. These last were about an average of such raw material as is recruited every day of the week at the metropolis, and shipped off to the whaling ports, to be manufactured into seamen.

John was, from the first, retired and uncommunicative, though less so in his intercourse with me than with any one else. He never referred to his antecedents, though I had given him my whole autobiography before we had been a fortnight at sea. And as I found him a sympathizing listener whenever I wanted to let my tongue run on, I don't think I ever thought of esteeming him the

less for his reticence as to his past life. I merely thought that he must have some good reason for wishing to conceal his true history, and was too conscientious to invent a false one.

One of John's eccentricities—I knew not what else to call it—was that he always kept his sea-chest locked. This is unusual in a whaler's fore-castle, and always subjects the man doing it to unpleasant remarks, as implying a want of confidence in the honesty of his shipmates. It is common to say of the man who does it, that “he is either a thief himself, or else thinks the rest of us are thieves.” But John Merrill only blushed, without making any audible reply, when such cutting insinuations were thrown out, as they occasionally were, in his hearing. They had no effect whatever in producing any change in his habits. Even I myself could never get a peep at his inventory. He was generous, even to a fault, in respect of giving or lending little matters; but he always kept his

chest in the darkest corner of our little dark, triangular quarters, and when he took out or put in anything, was careful never to leave it unlocked.

As concerned his duty, he did not appear to be the stuff of which crack sailors are made. But he won upon the good opinion of the officers, even of gruff Mr. Baldwin, our executive, a tarry old Triton, whom current report declared to be web-footed.

"I can't *haze that boy*," he would say. "We must ease him in, till he has eaten a few barrels of salt-horse to harden his sinews."

I could not tell why, but I don't think I was ever envious of my comrade because the mate favored him in this way, while he drove me up to my utmost capacity. Both of us were respectful and willing, and tried hard to do our duty, and as he expressed it, "make men of ourselves." And I think I felt rather elated to know that Mr. Baldwin discovered that there was tougher material in me than in John Merrill, and worked us accordingly. It was an honor to be selected to pull the mate's tub-oar, while he was enrolled in the rear-rank of the "shipkeepers." And I never complained, even when, in reefing topsails, the old salt would say, kindly, "Stop down, John Merrill, I want you to help me;" while, at the next moment, he roared at me on the yard, in a voice of thunder, "Lay out there, *you Bill*, and take up that dog's-ear! What are you *staring* at, in the bunt?"

I think I may have assumed a patronizing air in my intercourse with John, in consequence of all this. Feeling a professional superiority, I could not avoid letting it appear sometimes. But if so, he never seemed to notice it. If there was a sudden call, in our watch, for one of the boys to jump aloft and reeve studding-sail halyards, or loose a royal, John would start sometimes, but I would gently push him back and jump in ahead of him. I was proud of my ability to take the lead, and there was gratitude, instead of indignation or shame, in his clear, blue eye on such occasions. Some of the men standing near would perhaps intimate that he was wanting in pluck, to let me do this. But I don't think I ever thought so, though, of course, I felt flattered by such remarks, as any boy would.

But John Merrill made sure, though slow, progress in his duties, and his sinews hardened up, as Mr. Baldwin had prophesied. Though delicate in frame, his health seemed

perfect, and in some respects we had no better man among us. He was always ready to take an extra trick on the lookout, for he seemed to like being alone where he could commune with his own thoughts. And he was soon acknowledged to be the best helmsman on board. Did the sturdy old Amphion show a determination to carry her wheel an extra spoke to windward at "full-and-by," or to make wayward sheers and yaws when off before it, no one could manage her like this quiet, timid youth.

He was always ready to take my turn at the helm for me; indeed, would have taken them all if I would have let him. He could have done me no greater favor than this; for no duty, however laborious or dangerous, was so irksome to me as steering the ship. To do it well, required an abstraction of the mind for two hours from all other matters, with a touch, and a kind of foresight, or rather forefeeling, in which John Merrill excelled, but which few rough-and-tumble sailors possess.

Mr. Baldwin used to declare that "he never knew a right-down smart fellow who could steer more than a fair, decent trick; and that he never knew an A 1 extra helmsman who was good for much else." And, after an observation of many years, I think his statement was not far from the truth.

We made our first port at Talcahuano after doubling Cape Horn, and here John and I, being in the same watch, were much together on shore. But he would never stay after dark, and appeared utterly insensible to the fascinations of the Chilean brunettes. He would drink no liquor, and his example, in this respect, had a good effect upon myself.

We sailed for a cruise on the coast of Peru, after a short stay in port. Among the men shipped to fill vacancies was one known as "California Tom," a fellow of unbounded assurance and infinite "gas," to whom John and I both took an instinctive aversion at first acquaintance. But he found some congenial spirits on board the Amphion, as such fellows will in any ship where they may cast their fortunes.

We had not been long at sea before it appeared that we had some one in our circle who disdained the nice little distinctions of *meum* and *tuum*. Several articles had been mysteriously missed by different parties, and complaints were loud and clamorous.

A ship's fore-castle is as unfit a place for a thief as he can well find his way into. As much uneasiness is caused by his presence,



as by the knowledge that a powder-magazine is located somewhere under the deck, without knowing exactly where. Woe to him if he is caught; for though Jack's standard of morality is, in many respects, no higher than it ought to be, he has no mercy for a pilfering shipmate. He has, it may be said, one code of morals to regulate his dealings with his own comrades, and another much more elastic, for the great barbarian world outside.

We became a very unhappy family after this discovery, for, of course, all mutual confidence was lost, until it should appear who the offender was. No one was exempt from suspicion; though the weight of it was equally divided between California Tom and my demure friend, John Merrill. Each had his friends, who believed the other guilty, but while the boy modestly refrained from saying anything about it, Tom did not scruple to head his own party.

"It's easy enough to see who the thief is," I heard him say one night, as he occupied the centre of a little knot of his cronies. "It's that sleek-faced little hypocrite that is at the wheel now."

"Of course 'tis," said Derby, one of the "congenials." "I've always thought so from the first of it. It's enough to condemn any fellow to know that he keeps his donkey always locked."

"What business has one man to be allowed to lock his donkey, anyhow?" demanded Tom, loud enough now for all to hear. "I say, let's go and kick the lid open and see what's in it."

"Sit right down!" said Frank Wightman, from our side of the house; for Tom had risen as if to carry his suggestion into effect. "Don't undertake anything of the kind. John Merrill isn't here to speak for himself, and no man shall break his chest open while I'm by to prevent it."

"Don't you want to find out who the thief is?" asked Derby,

"Of course I do; and I don't think I should have to go far to do that. If there's to be a general search of chests and bunks, I'm ready to agree to it at any time; and perhaps the boy would be willing to open *his*, in such a case. But I say it shan't be *kicked* open in his absence."

"It's plain enough that he's the guilty one," said Tom, "when his chest is the only one locked, and—"

"I don't know about that!" retorted Frank, with a significant look. "A thief may

find other places for his plunder besides in his chest. Indeed, if he's an old hand at it, he would be likely to."

This home-thrust put an end to the discussion for the moment; for Tom, as well as Derby and the rest of his gang, were afraid of Wightman, who alone was a match for any two of them. But when John was relieved from the wheel, we told him what had occurred, and how suspicion was thickening upon him. Frank asked him, if he were willing to open his chest and let us all have a look at its contents.

"No," said he, quietly, "I am not willing."

"But why not if you are innocent?"

"I cannot say why not, but I can assure you that I know nothing about the stolen things. You must either take my word for it, or, if a general search is determined upon, open my chest by force, for I shall not consent to have it done."

"I believe what you say, John," said Frank, "and so does Bill, here, that you are entirely innocent. But there are many who don't, and there will be still more, if you don't satisfy them. Perhaps if you would let me, alone, overhaul it, or Bill, if that would suit you better, eh?"

"No," I cannot show the contents of it, even to Bill. If the matter is pressed hard, I shall appeal to the old man for protection—though I don't know as that would do any good."

"None at all," said Wightman and I, both at once.

"What would he do, do you think?"

"Exercise his authority, and demand the key at once—or open it by force. He has heard about the thefts, as you know; and I heard him tell Mr. Baldwin that, if another case was reported, he should make a general search, and flog the thief, if he could be found."

The boy rested his face upon his hands in thought, but made no answer.

"Never mind, John," said Wightman; "don't fret about it. No harm shall come to you, anyhow. I'm satisfied of your truth, and if you still decline to show your things, you shan't be forced to, at least by anybody in *this* end of the ship. But think this matter over, and perhaps to-morrow you'll feel differently about it. I've no idle curiosity, myself, to want to know your secret; but I *would* like to satisfy others, who haven't the same trust in your integrity that I have."

That night in the middle watch, I was

awakened by a slight clicking noise, and saw California Tom, by the dim light of the hanging lamp, stealthily opening John's chest with a key. John himself, as well as all the rest of my watch, was sleeping soundly; but I knew that he never left his key where it could be found. It was always about his person, night and day. Tom must have found a duplicate key to fit the chest.

I was about to speak and give the alarm to Wightman and others; but, on second thought, determined to wait a moment and see the result. Tom had a bundle in one hand, which appeared to be a new flannel shirt, and as the lock flew open at last, he lost no time in looking into the chest, but pushed in the bundle, relocked it and went on deck.

I considered the matter, and determined to tell Frank Wightman; which I did as soon as our watch turned out.

"Don't tell John," were his first words; "I hope he won't open his chest and discover it; for I want to see what kind of a plot is hatching."

John Merrill had the morning mast-head, and went up to his post at daylight, without having had occasion to look into his chest. Tom was up and stirring soon afterwards—an unusual proceeding for him in a morning watch off duty—and headed off Captain Soule as soon as he made his appearance above deck.

Presently the order was given to call all hands, and muster them up. One of the mates was sent into the fore-castle to see that no one lingered, and to have all the men's kits and effects roused up to the light of day. The captain was evidently in a towering rage, for he had passed lightly over several previous reports of theft, hoping the matter would be adjusted without his interference. But Tom had lost a new shirt during the night, and Captain Soule had lost—his patience.

"I'll find it if it's inside the ship!" said he; "and I'll flog the man that stole it."

Several chests and bags had been emptied of their contents in the presence of us all; for John had been called down from aloft, and stood, thoughtful and agitated, at my side. When the captain came to the locked chest,

"Whose is this?" he demanded.

"Mine, sir," spoke up the lad.

"G' me your key!"

"If you'll excuse me, sir—I would like to speak a word with you—by ourselves, sir, if you please."

But the captain was not in a humor to listen to any remonstrance at that moment.

"Let me get through with this cursed business before I talk with anybody! It doesn't look well, anyhow, that you keep your chest locked up!"

He swung back his heavy boot as he spoke, and with a single kick under the projecting edge of the lid it flew open.

"There's my shirt!" exclaimed Tom, seizing the bundle that lay on top. He shook it open, showed his marks, and it was at once identified beyond all dispute.

"Enough said! We're on the right track, now," said Captain Soule. "Take up this chest and carry it aft!" And he closed the lid with a bang.

"Mr. Baldwin," he continued, "strip John Merrill's back, and seize him up! It's a new thing for me to flog one of my men—a thing I never did—but I've sworn it in this case, and I'll keep my word."

The poor boy, overwhelmed with confusion, could hardly find a word to protest his innocence, as the mate led him aft. But Frank Wightman at this moment neared the captain respectfully, and touched him gently on the shoulder. A word was spoken; the captain relaxed his angry brows to listen to it, for Wightman was the best man in the fore-castle. The two walked aft together, conversing earnestly. I kept my eye on them, till Frank made a signal, which I understood, when I followed.

"Mr. Derrick," said the captain to the second mate, "keep everything as it stands, with the chests, forward. Don't allow a man to touch a thing, till further orders."

He beckoned Wightman and myself to come below. But as he did not countermand the orders he had given about seizing John up, the mate, it seems, proceeded to obey them. He prepared the selzings, but when he ordered the boy to remove his shirt, he met with unexpected resistance. While I was relating to Captain Soule, in the forward cabin, what I had seen during the middle watch, there was a scuffle over our heads, and John Merrill, in a frenzy of excitement, rushed down the stairs and into the after-cabin. "Hold on, Mr. Baldwin! Never mind what I told you, for the present." And the captain followed the boy into the sanctum, while we awaited the result. In a minute afterwards he put his head out at the door with the strangest look on his face that I had ever seen mortal man wear.

"Wightman! you and Bill pass—John Merrill's chest down the stairs—right into this room."

We obeyed the order, and set our burden down at his feet. But the lad was not to be seen as we looked about us.

"That'll do. You can go on deck, now—I'll talk with you again, soon." And the door was closed between us and the mystery.

It was half an hour before Captain Soule came up, and ordered the search continued. When he came to Tom's chest, he overhauled it very carefully; but it was, apparently, emptied to the bottom, without finding any stolen property. But, still unsatisfied, he stood it up on end, thumped it heavily, and threw it bottom up. A false bottom was dislodged and fell out, followed by the various missing articles!

A general cry of indignation was raised, and a strong disposition was manifested to lynch California Tom. But Mr. Baldwin took upon himself the office of executioner, this time with a good will.

"I always felt it in my bones, that John Merrill was innocent," said he to Captain Soule; "and when it came to stripping his shirt, I hadn't, somehow, any heart to do it."

"I'm glad you didn't succeed in doing it," was the reply. "I couldn't have flogged him if he had been guilty—nor could you, either."

"How so, sir?"

"Do you think you could lay the cat on the back of a woman?"

That comical look of the captain's was reflected, nay multiplied, tenfold, in the rough face of the old mate.

"A woman?" he gasped out, "John Merrill?"

"Ay, a woman, Mr. Baldwin. Annie Carroll is her name, now."

"But—what are you going to do with him, sir?"

"Do with him? With *her*, you mean—put him, or put her, or *it*, ashore, of course, as soon as I can make a port. We must give her a stateroom, in the cabin, and have her to wear such a dress as belongs to her sex."

"Well—well—" said Mr. Baldwin, reflectively; "I never had anything bring me up with a round-turn like that." Then a bright idea seemed to have struck him, and he

demanded triumphantly, "*Where's your clothes to dress her in?*"

"She's got all her dry goods in her chest, ready to wear."

"What? in *John Merrill's* chest, do you mean?"

"Of course. Whose else should I mean? That's why he—she, I mean—always kept it locked, and was so secret about it."

I shall not spend time to tell how we talked the matter over in the fore-castle that night, and compared notes, and went back to every little incident of the outward passage, that might be supposed to have any bearing upon this astounding discovery. Of course, there were those ready to say they had guessed the truth months ago; but I venture to say, that not a man on board the *Amphion* had the slightest suspicion of the truth, until it was revealed to Captain Soule, as I have related. And how much longer we might have been in the dark, but for the attempt to flog her, it is difficult to say.

John Merrill stood no more watches on board the *Amphion*, nor went to the mast-head. But Annie Carroll, a beautiful young lady, save that she wore her hair rather too much *au garçon*, sometimes steered a trick at the wheel when she felt in the humor, until our arrival at Callao, where she became, when her story was known, the heroine, the lioness of the hour. A passage home was secured for her; and she took leave of us all, with no desire, as she confessed, to follow any further the profession of a sailor.

It was the old, old story. An orphan, a harsh guardian, and an attempt to force her into a marriage with one she disliked. A madcap scheme, in which she had embarked from a wayward impulse, and persisted in because she hardly knew how or when to retreat. And we were constrained to admit, when we reviewed all the circumstances, that she had nobly sustained the double character, and had preserved all the finer attributes of her sex, while she laid aside the apparel.

And will it be wondered that she lost her heart while on board the *Amphion*? Not to me; for, of course, I was but a boy in her eyes. But when I last saw John Merrill, he was Mrs. Captain Wightman, and still claimed to be, if not the boldest seaman, the best helmsman, at least, of the family circle.

## JO'S EXPERIMENTS.

MATTIE WINFIELD TORREY

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## JO'S EXPERIMENTS.

BY MATTIE WINFIELD TORREY.

THAT Jo! I always knew I should have a story to tell you about her.

People with queer pug-noses are a fortune to story-tellers like me; things are always happening to them; they are continually getting into trouble of one sort or another, and nothing pleases me so well as to form the acquaintance of one of these inquisitive little turn-up affairs which seem perpetually on the lookout for adventure.

Jo had a pug-nose, of course, otherwise I shouldn't have been apt to notice her a great deal, for children are not much in my way; that is to say, they are a great deal in my way at certain times. Her real name was Josephine Elton, as I discovered by reference

to the family Bible. I never should have found it out in any other way, for by no chance was she ever called anything but Jo.

Her mother kept a boarding-house on the pleasantest and quietest of streets, and one fine spring day, being compelled to move my quarters, I found myself snugly domiciled beneath her roof. She was the most timid and delicate of women, and declared that the sole inducement she had for keeping boarders was that it assembled a houseful around her, and took away the dread and fear of being left alone. I imagine Jo had a father once, indeed, I recall the portrait of a stout good-natured looking man, which hung over the parlor mantel; the original of which was

popularly supposed to have been Mr. Elton, deceased.

We were a very pleasant party gathered beneath that roof, and unlike any other set of boarders that I ever heard of, we took the trouble to become really acquainted, and found out that, as a general thing, we liked each other.

There was the professor, who was a Swede by birth and nationality, and who had come to America out of curiosity, and was then professor of Scandinavian literature in the college. The professor had written a book on the early history of Scandinavia, and to have seen his eyes sparkle when the nicely bound volumes were first exhibited and circulated among our little *coterie* would have done your heart good. His simple nature took no pains to conceal the honest pride he felt in his handiwork, and we were all too full of admiration for the research and learning the book displayed, to find fault with his very evident tenderness for his work.

There was Mr. Deeves, familiarly known as "the deacon," who labored under the delusion that he could play the flute, and who did torture that much abused instrument most unmercifully, of an evening. There was Miss Courter the music teacher, who could, would, and did play when she was invited to do so, and on that account, if for no other reason, deserves honorable mention herein. Her roommate, Miss Fledger, had a sweet voice, and at times gave us the benefit thereof.

There was the doctor, who was liable to be called out at most unreasonable hours, and always came in to his breakfast looking very wise, as if his pet patient had just passed the most critical of all dangerous crises. Then there was a pair of nice young men who did the bass and tenor in our parlor quartets, curled their hair, petted their mustaches, and were as fascinating as they knew how to be.

Last but not least, by any manner of means, there was the inevitable newly married couple, a bride of decidedly uncertain age, and a groom old enough to have been a grandfather years since. His continual reference to "my first wife" must have been especially consoling to his second "venture."

But I started to tell about Jo, and I'm not going to lose sight of her any longer. If there was anything that child couldn't do, I'd like you to mention it!

She slid down the balusters, until I never

descended the stairs that I did not look to see if she had made a finish of herself, and was lying with a broken neck at the bottom. She stood on her head in odd corners, and would bounce out at you in the most unexpected fashion, feet foremost. She went through the halls whistling like any boy, and always took particular pains to make a racket when she came in from school. She certainly had the soundest pair of lungs of any child I ever saw, and no sense of diffidence ever made her backward about exhibiting her remarkable powers.

Her mother's gentle "Now, Jo dear, can't you make less noise?" or, "My dear, I wish you would be more quiet," fell unheeded amidst the tempests which the child kicked up. Poor Mrs. Elton was worried to death about her, fearing some terrible accident would surely happen to the heedless girl, and mourning over her boyish wild ways. Jo was getting large enough to behave somewhat less rudely, but she seemed to have no conception of what was right and proper, and merely followed out the promptings of a rude untamed nature. In doing this, of course she gave her mother a world of anxiety and trouble.

One day, the doctor having gone out in a hurry and left his office door ajar, Jo slipped in and began to revel in the wonders of this new and unexplored paradise.

First she contented herself with turning over a large collection of plates that lay upon the table, diagrams of the "human form divine," which Jo thought funny enough. But these failed, after a time, to afford food for her inquiring mind, and she looked about at the shelves upon which were arranged a plentiful supply of bottles.

"Such sights of them!" thought Jo. "I wonder what can be in them? There's a pink one, and a green one, and a blue one, and any quantity of nasty black ones. There is a tall one, and a short one, and here's an empty one. I wonder if it hadn't better be filled up?"

No sooner said than done. Jo was seized with a sudden desire to put the doctor's medicine bottles in order; so she poured the contents of the overfull bottles into those that didn't seem to have their full share of drugs, and she very soon made such a variety of mixtures as no chemist on earth could have successfully analyzed. In all the range of the *materia medica* there were no such compounds as those that Jo invented.

"That's dreadful nice looking stuff," said Jo, handing down a jar filled with a pure white cottony substance, and labelled "Quinia." "I didn't think doctor's stuff was so nice. It must be fun to be a doctor. I wonder how it tastes, anyway?" eyeing the beautiful drug, and finally ladling out a dose.

"Now I'll play I'm sick and the doctor is going to give me something to make me well!" And suiting the action to the word, down went the potion.

"O! O!" shrieked Jo; "what nasty bitter stuff! Ugh! O! it's horrible. I shall taste it for a week, I know I shall!"

Finding that no amount of rubbing with her handkerchief would remove from her tongue the dreadfully bitter flavor, she bethought herself of looking about for something to remove the taste.

Reaching down a bottle filled with a lovely amber-colored liquid, Jo proceeded cautiously to taste the least drop in the world.

"Dear! dear!" cried she; "why, it's worse than the other. I am sure it has taken the skin all off my mouth. How it burns! The miserable old hot stuff! Doctors ought to be ashamed to make people take any such medicine as that. O! my tongue is on fire. There must be something here that will help it."

And not yet satisfied with her researches, Jo proceeded to take down another bottle. This time the liquid was colorless, and looked so much like water she was sure it couldn't harm her. It tasted quite innocently—rather a sweetish pleasant taste, and an aromatic smell. Jo took a good swallow, and another and another, until the bad taste and the burning sensation were both gone, and she began to congratulate herself upon having at last found her grand desideratum, a "nice medicine," when she began to feel dreadfully queer. Her head buzzed around like a great top, and a million of bees seemed humming in her ears. The room grew dark suddenly, Jo threw out her arms, clutching blindly at some imaginary support, and fell all in a heap in the middle of the room, where the doctor, coming in a few moments after, found her lying motionless, as if dead.

And dead she would have been, beyond question, had not the doctor, after taking a hasty glance around, and getting an idea of the true state of the case, called in the good professor from the room above, and locking the door in order to keep out all intruders,

gone vigorously to work with a stomach-pump.

"She's taken that whole bottle of morphia," said he, "and unless it comes up, she will play no more of her pranks."

"Ah! so, so?" whispered the kind-hearted professor; "the *klima* mother would grieve for the *hesta kint*. Do you all you can, and tell me how I shall help you."

The two men worked faithfully over Jo's limp figure, and it was not until she had returned to consciousness, and could open her eyes and stare about, that her mother was informed of her child's illness. Even then, the imminent peril she had so barely escaped was as much as possible concealed. As it was, Mrs. Elton was frightened half out of her wits, and Jo was carried up and lain on the couch in her mother's room; and the little woman hung over her for the rest of the day, weeping tears of joy.

Jo was soon restored to her usual health and spirits; but I don't think any consideration would have been sufficiently powerful to induce her to set foot inside the doctor's office after that one morning's experimenting with the contents of its mysterious bottles.

I am sorry to have to record the fact that the dose of morphia did not cure Jo of her fondness for experimenting.

It couldn't have been more than a fortnight afterward, that I was awakened one night by soft footsteps and whispers in the hall outside my door. My first impulse was to cry "thieves!" "robbers!" and "murder!" at the top of my voice, but restraining myself with the reflection that burglars did not hold conferences at keyholes in that style, I listened and heard my own name pronounced.

"Who is it?" said I, "and what is it?"

"It's I, Miss Courter. Open the door, and I'll tell you."

I swung open the door, and there in the moonlight stood both Courter and Fledger, looking ghostly enough.

"We think it's fire," sniffed Fledger.

"It awoke us," explained Courter. "Something's burning. Don't you smell it?"

I stepped outside and elevated my nose to the proper angle for taking observations. Sure enough, there was a suspicious odor plainly perceptible.

"Yes," said I, "I smell it."

"We thought we'd not alarm the house until we were certain," said Fledger.

"Let's see if we can find out where the fire is," suggested Courter.

"Agreed," said I.

Stepping softly across the hall, we came to the stairway leading to the third story. Down this the queer odor seemed to float.

"That's Jo's room up there," whispered Fledger. "I'll wager she's at the bottom of this!"

"Humph! I think it more than likely," said I. "Let's go up and investigate. She may have set herself or the house afire, and be burning up at this moment!"

Full of our benevolent intention to rescue Jo, we glided quickly up the stairs and burst open her door. There was no fire visible, but a suspiciously strong smell as of something burning greeted our olfactories, and a groan from the bed attested to the fact that something ailed its occupant.

"Jo," said I, "is that you? What's the matter?"

"O dear! I'm so sick! I shall die!" groaned Jo, in the most agonizing tone imaginable.

"Dear! dear!" sighed Fledger. "Let's have a light. Now, what ails you, Jo? And what's this burning? You haven't set anything afire, have you?"

"I 'spect it's the tobacco," groaned Jo. "Nasty stuff! I wish I'd never touched it!"

"Tobacco!" cried Courter. "You haven't been smoking? You wicked girl!"

"Gracious knows, I wish I hadn't!" moaned Jo. "I made some cigarettes—O!—and they tasted good at first, but—O! O! they've made me awful sick, and I wish I'd never touched them. Ugh!"

"Jo," said I, severely, "let this be a lesson to you. Let such monkey tricks alone, and learn to behave yourself. You have frightened us terribly, for we supposed the house was on fire. You are large enough to have a little sense, and you ought to consider—"

"O! O!" interrupted Jo, "I feel so bad. Don't scold; and please call mother!"

Mrs. Elton was called, the doctor was aroused, the whole house was full of commotion, in the midst of which Courter, Fledger, and I managed to slip away to our rooms.

Jo didn't hear the last of this experiment for a long time, and though she is now a grown-up young lady, and would no more think of standing on her head than either you or I, she has never been able to overcome her aversion to tobacco.